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Investing in rural people

Position Paper on Engaging Rural Youth at IFAD: An Approach for Connecting Youth Voices to Action

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Contents

Abbreviations and acronyms	ii
Executive summary	iii
I. Introduction	1
A. Why rural youth voices matter	1
B. IFAD’s commitment to engaging rural youth	1
C. Purpose and methodology	2
II. A synthesis of experiences	2
A. Assessment of existing youth engagement modalities	2
B. Youth consultations	3
C. Lessons and key observations	3
III. The need for IFAD to adopt an approach to youth engagement	4
A. Rationale	4
B. A theory of change	5
C. Conceptual underpinning of the four scenarios	5
D. Potential roles for rural youth	5
IV. Defining the four scenarios	6
A. Scenario 1: Creating a new rural youth advisory council	6
B. Scenario 2: Working with existing youth councils	7
C. Scenario 3: Pursuing dynamic engagement with existing youth-based platforms and networks	7
D. Scenario 4: Taking a grass-roots approach	8
E. Monitoring	9
F. Cost estimates	10
V. Conclusion and next steps	10
A. Design and implementation of a grass-roots approach	10
B. Next steps and milestones	11

Annex

- I. A grass-roots approach to connecting youth voices to action (summary of the design document)
- II. Logical framework and budget

Appendix

- I. Reference

Abbreviations and acronyms

ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group
RBAs	Rome-based agencies
RYAP	Rural Youth Action Plan
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation

Executive summary

1. The purpose of this position paper is to put forward recommendations for enhancing the involvement of youth in IFAD governance at all levels. This is one of the key components of the Rural Youth Action Plan for delivering on the Eleventh Replenishment of IFAD's Resources' commitment to increase the youth-sensitivity of IFAD investments in response to the challenge posed by youth unemployment. Four scenarios have been developed on the basis of extensive regional consultations with young rural men and women, the experience of IFAD field staff in working with specific target groups, the views of key stakeholders, lessons learned from other organizations and United Nations agencies, and a review of materials and the literature on youth engagement. The recommended scenario – Scenario 4: A grass-roots approach for connecting youth voices to action – is aimed at addressing the factors that are hindering the organization of what are at present fragmented rural youth voices at the grass-roots level.
2. Action based on Scenario 4 can help to achieve inclusivity for youth voices and to effectively connect them to the processes involved in the design and delivery of country strategies and projects. It can also function as a key component of a "do good" approach to the formation of local pressure groups for policy engagement. Concrete synergies will be forged with Scenario 2 by systematically engaging with existing regional networks and global youth councils. Grass-roots youth priorities and knowledge derived from IFAD operations will complement regional and global learning and advocacy processes, which will involve close coordination with the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger¹ and the United Nations Economic and Social Council Youth Forum.
3. Formal consultations are taking place with the Interim Board of the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger with a view to achieving effective functional cooperation. An agreement has been reached with members of the Interim Board to identify key complementary areas of work and the appropriate modalities for operationalizing synergies between the two bodies (see annex 1). Joint efforts have been made to:
 - (i) Develop a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between the two bodies;
 - (ii) Formulate mobilization strategies for the grass-roots approach to add value to the work of the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger at the regional and global levels;
 - (iii) Map out youth entities for effective engagement;
 - (iv) Involve the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger in the roll-out of the grass-roots approach so that it can review that process and provide inputs, as appropriate; and
 - (v) The grass-roots approach will be piloted in five countries (one in each regional division) and will thereafter be gradually incorporated into country programming work during IFAD12 and beyond.

¹ The Youth Council of the Rome-based agencies (RBAs) was launched at the 41st session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Conference, held in June 2019. However, as it was being set up, it gradually evolved into a more autonomous and independent initiative under the name of the Youth Council for Zero Hunger. A working group made up of a mix of young people and senior representatives of national and international youth organizations are currently in the process of fully developing its vision statement, operating principles, organizational guidelines and the framework for its collaboration with the RBAs. As at June 2020, the Youth Alliance is currently structured around its Interim Board and working groups that facilitate interaction with RBAs and the Committee on World Food Security. The Youth Alliance also intends to establish an advisory network of representatives of RBAs and other private or public supporting entities to facilitate two-way communication. Until December 2020, the International Agri-Food Network is acting as its secretariat, but the Council is looking for another host organization.

I. Introduction

A. Why rural youth voices matter

1. The 1.2 billion young people in the world make up a significant share of the global population but have no formal voice.² Yet they have a huge potential to be a positive force for change if they are given a suitable role in the development process. IFAD's 2019 Rural Development Report (RDR) offers examples of ways in which efforts to work with youth can leverage the rural transformation process by tapping into the unprecedented, rapid, transformative wave of technology change that is sweeping the world.
2. Since the youth population is diverse and its members face different challenges and opportunities depending on where they are situated along the rural-urban continuum, they can offer a unique perspective on context-specific issues that matter to them and they are the ones who are best placed to identify workable solutions for the implementation of youth-friendly policies and programming. Yet youth often lack access to the channels that would allow them to influence decision-making and are excluded from governance processes at the national, regional and global levels. Since sustainable agriculture is critical to feeding the world and averting climate and environmental crises, collaborating with young farmers and agripreneurs is essential in order to tap into their transformative potential.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have a long-term impact on young people in rural areas in the form of even higher unemployment levels and is already causing massive job losses and exacerbating income and farm-labour constraints. Vulnerable and low-income groups, especially women and youth, are bearing the brunt of these impacts. There is also an increased likelihood that young people will leave the cities and return to rural areas as jobs dry up and as the disease continues to spread more quickly in crowded urban slums.

B. IFAD's commitment to engaging rural youth

4. To make agriculture attractive to youth, engagement mechanisms will need to be adopted that can nurture young people's aspirations and embrace youth-led ideas that will make interventions more responsive to the actual needs of young people. Policies and investments that promote a broader rural transformation process need to be coupled with targeted actions that translate these policies into better opportunities for young people. Trivelli and Morel³ show that the vast majority of approaches to the promotion of youth participation in developing countries are lacking targeted mechanisms for rural youth involvement.
5. IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025 and the Rural Youth Action Plan (RYAP) acknowledge the need to mainstream the needs and aspirations of rural youth into IFAD operations. As it looks for ways to step up its impact under the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD12), the Fund believes that youth are central to the achievement of many of the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Dynamic approaches are called for that will ensure that youth voices are heard in decision-making processes and country programming activities.

² This makes them more likely to engage in disruptive activities that are costly to society and that dampen economic growth.

³ Carolina Trivelli, Jorge Morel, *Rural youth inclusion, empowerment and participation*, a background paper for the IFAD 2019 Rural Development Report.

C. Purpose and methodology

6. The purpose of this position paper is to define a new approach for involving youth in decision-making at IFAD. As a major component of the RYAP (action area 4) which contributes to the fulfilment of IFAD11 commitments, this approach will leverage efforts to increase youth employment in developing countries.
7. Several workstreams contributed to the development of this position paper, including nine case studies of youth engagement mechanisms⁴ in United Nations agencies, supranational bodies and development agencies, as did IFAD initiatives such as the biennial Indigenous Peoples and Farmers' Forum. The persons tasked with the preparation of this paper made an effort to listen to youth voices across the various regions and to hear the views of IFAD country office and regional hub staff. What they learned from doing so underpins the recommendations made herein.

II. A synthesis of experiences

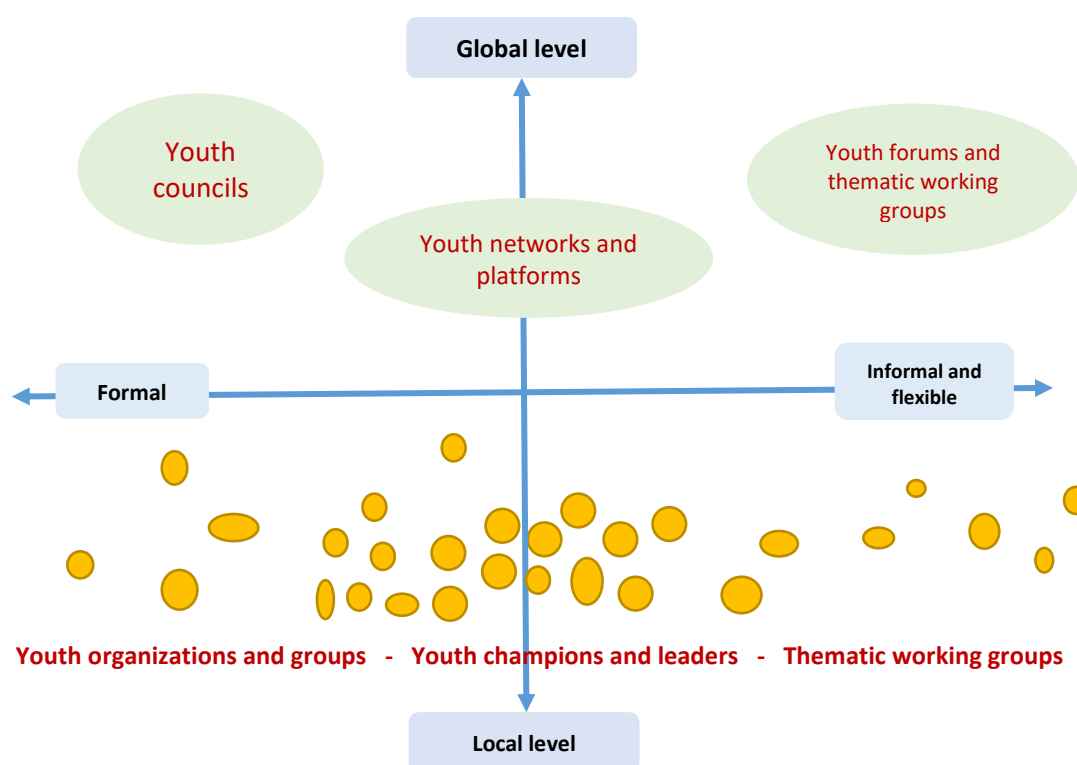
A. Assessment of existing youth engagement modalities

8. Two different dimensions of existing youth engagement experiences, such as youth advisory councils, youth forums and youth-led networks, were examined: (i) functions and representation; and (ii) governance arrangements.
9. Figure 1 below sets out the findings of these assessments by plotting them along two main axes. The horizontal axis illustrates the transition from more formal modalities to more informal and flexible ones, while the vertical axis reflects the range in levels of governance, starting from the global level and continuing on down to the local level. Nearly all the experiences that were analysed concerned formal involvement in advisory roles at the international level hosted by international bodies where processes are largely headquarters-based and where there is limited scope for triggering grass-roots action. Challenges thus remain in conceiving an operational approach that effectively links grass-roots initiatives to vertical (global, national, regional and local) levels of action. This points to the key challenge that needs to be surmounted in order to aggregate scattered youth voices at the grass-roots level, to broaden participation and to facilitate structured engagement with the hard-to-reach youth population⁵ in rural areas.

⁴ European Youth Forum; Global Youth Advisory Council at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) Youth Advisory Board; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Youth Forum; Tunza Youth Advisory Council at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Global Indigenous Youth Caucus at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII); European Council of Young Farmers; Integral Association of Rural Youth Networks in El Salvador (AREJURES); and the Young Entrepreneur Association (ASOJE).

⁵ These challenges also emerged over the course of the Farmers' Forum process, which eventually led to the adoption of a decentralized consultation process focusing on the regional and national levels with a view to bringing it closer to the base and improving synergies with IFAD operations.

Figure 1
Dimensions of the assessment



B. Youth consultations

10. During the regional consultations, young people reiterated the importance of participatory and differentiated approaches to youth engagement. They emphasized the need for approaches that match up with the diverse socio-economic and policy environments that young people must deal with. Thus, in large part, the success of participatory mechanisms depends on finding the right recipe for each context.⁶ In line with the principle of “Leave No One Behind”, this holds true for the effort to shape an IFAD youth engagement approach, since such an approach can only be successful if it can be adapted to suit each specific operational context.

C. Lessons and key observations

11. A key emerging issue is the fragmentation of the voices of existing youth groups, individual champions/leaders and youth clubs, which interferes with effective voice inclusivity at the grass-roots level.⁷ Rural youth are less connected, more isolated and often unable to cohesively articulate issues affecting them through existing local, national, regional and global youth councils and platforms. This finding is in line with the RDR, which reviewed 54 mechanisms specifically related to youth participation.⁸
12. It is therefore suggested that special emphasis should be placed on aggregating youth voices at the grass-roots and national levels. Organizing youth voices at the grass-roots level would go that extra mile and would serve the twofold purpose of grounding a youth approach at the local level and opening up space in which to reach out to marginalized rural youth. It would also offer a greater potential for including

⁶ Rural Development Report (2019).

⁷ UN-HABITAT (2011), UNESCO (2017).

⁸ Carolina Trivelli and Jorge Morel, *Rural youth inclusion, empowerment and participation*, a background paper for the IFAD 2019 Rural Development Report.

young people who face multiple challenges, such as youth with disabilities and indigenous youth, in a culturally relevant format.

13. As a heterogeneous group, youth require dynamic and differentiated approaches tailored to each specific operational context, especially at the local level, where youth have very specific needs and there is a greater chance that they will be excluded. Young people underlined this point during the consultations where those who are currently members of farmers' organizations drew attention to the limited nature of their participation in decision-making and leadership positions. This holds true especially for young indigenous women in rural areas and young women with disabilities, who are likely to shoulder a quadruple burden of discrimination. Young people have requested IFAD to adopt differentiated forms of engagement and to employ modalities that take into account young people's diverse realities, give them scope to think freely and innovatively, and allow them to shape their own development paths⁹ as active partners.
14. The diversity of youth groupings and the specificity of each operational context call for a good balance between flexible and structured forms of engagement – between the different degrees of formality characteristic of traditional youth councils and the more fluid and loose forms of organization that are typical of networks and peer-relationship models.

III. The need for IFAD to adopt an approach to youth engagement

A. Rationale

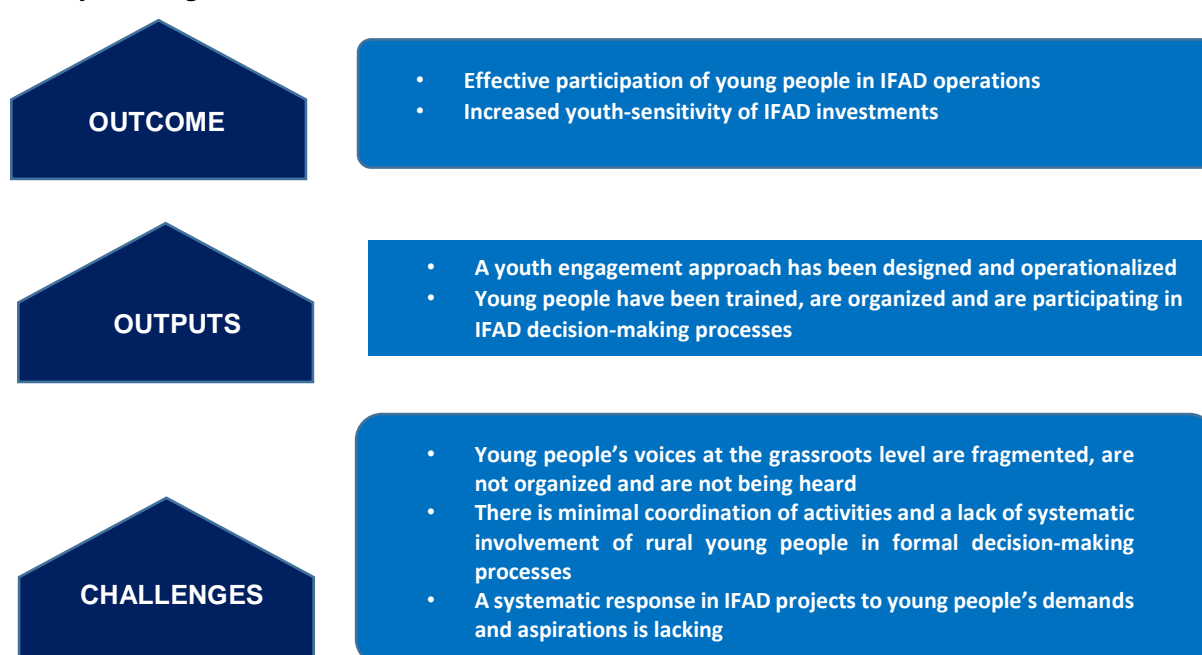
15. A more organized approach to engagement with rural youth will contribute to: (i) the mobilization and aggregation of what are now fragmented youth voices at the grass-roots level so that they can benefit from economies of scale and strengthen interconnectivity with national, regional and global levels; and (ii) an acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of the young population and the need to ensure youth voice inclusivity. In the words of one of the participants of the youth consultations, Fayrin Enrique Rivera Suarez, from Nicaragua: "One of the main challenges faced by youth in Nicaragua and Latin America is to be able to create spaces of dialogue and strategic planning with development programmes, governments and policymakers so that they can have confidence in young people's capacity to innovate in sustainable agriculture."
16. A dedicated, dynamic and differentiated approach will offer a unique opportunity to: (i) organize the scattered voices of grass-roots youth groups and individual young people so that they can channel their ideas in a cohesive manner into more formal decision-making processes at the country level and can act as "do good" pressure groups advocating rural transformation; and (ii) consolidate youth voices in the form of knowledge and/or representation in order to inform country programming work, regional South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) initiatives and corporate debates, including those undertaken by the Executive Board and the Governing Council, and leverage outreach potential through existing youth bodies such as the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum.
17. Now, in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis and in line with IFAD's COVID-19 response strategy, harnessing youth potential and listening to young people's voices can make an invaluable contribution to country programmes. This would be a win-win situation for the whole ecosystem and range of actors involved and would improve the quality of IFAD and governmental youth-sensitive investments.

⁹ The majority of participants in the regional consultations identified this need.

B. A theory of change

18. The theory of change for this initiative builds on the RYAP commitment to make effective and efficient contributions to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2 and 8 by advancing the social and economic empowerment of young rural women and men. As illustrated in figure 2, the challenges are: (i) youth voices at the grass-roots level are fragmented, not well organized and are going unheard; (ii) the coordinated and systematic involvement of youth in formal decision-making processes is lacking; and (iii) IFAD needs to improve its response to youth demands and aspirations in the delivery of its operations. Engaging rural youth as a standard practice based on a dedicated approach, coupled with capacity-building, would lead to the effective involvement of youth in IFAD decision-making processes, increase the youth-sensitivity of IFAD investments and support the socio-economic empowerment of rural youth, all of which are key expected outcomes of RYAP implementation under IFAD11.

Figure 2
Theory of change



C. Conceptual underpinning of the four scenarios

19. Roger Hart’s ladder of participation¹⁰ for the equal engagement of adults and youth was an influential factor in shaping the four scenarios of actions aimed at ensuring that youth are informed, consulted and provided with opportunities for leadership and can actively participate in decision-making.
20. Trivelli and Morel’s (2019) work on applying a rural lens to youth participation also underpinned the thought processes that went into the development of scenarios in which young people are beneficiaries of specific interventions and services while playing an active role in the design, implementation and monitoring or evaluation of development projects, as well as becoming service providers and promoters of innovative agricultural practices.

D. Potential roles for rural youth

21. This approach encompasses the entire menu of participation options, whereby youth may play the role of beneficiaries, service providers or simply local champions and leaders through their involvement in a combination of different functions performed

¹⁰ The ladder of participation (R.A. Hart [2013]) serves as a beginning typology for thinking about young people’s participation in projects, its nature and purpose.

at all levels of development – ranging from policy dialogue to programme design and from implementation to monitoring. Table 1 below gives examples of possible roles and functions. In addition to playing the roles and performing the functions outlined below, elected youth representatives will be accountable to their constituencies for ensuring that the voices of the young people whom they represent are heard.

Table 1
Young people's roles and functions

	Consultative	Advisory	Collaborative	Decision-making
Beneficiaries	Express concerns and aspirations	Identify practices and activities to be shared across programmes	Identify solutions and support design of SSTC activities	Express concerns and aspirations that are then directly reflected in the alternatives that are developed
Service providers/ co-implementers	Share best practices and resources	Advise on tested innovations in formulating solutions	Partner with project or programme management units in project implementation	Advice and recommendations incorporated into decisions to the extent possible
Local champions/ leaders	Provide information to assist IFAD teams in understanding problems, opportunities and solutions	Provide feedback on analyses, decisions and strategies	Participate in country strategic opportunities programme consultations (COSOP) and partner in advocacy at the national, regional and global levels	Youth-favoured choices are implemented

Adapted from: Trivelli and Morel (2019) and United States Agency for International Development (2014).

IV. Defining the four scenarios

22. The youth consultations led to the definition of six criteria for determining the best possible scenario, as follows:
 - (i) The potential for engaging youth at the grass-roots level as active partners, not merely beneficiaries;
 - (ii) Inclusivity – the provision of scope to avoid youth elite capture and to align with IFAD policies on poverty targeting and on gender and indigenous peoples issues;
 - (iii) Flexibility for differentiated actions at the grass-roots level, tangible youth benefits and responsiveness to youth issues in national, regional and global policy actions;
 - (iv) Practicality - building on and scaling up existing successful initiatives for youth involvement at the project level;
 - (v) Innovation - harnessing the innovation potential of young people's ideas about ways to drive social and economic advancement; and
 - (vi) The potential for fostering partnerships with existing youth engagement mechanisms and with the private sector and universities.
23. IFAD has therefore explored four scenarios based on the following considerations:
 - (i) lessons and key observations;
 - (ii) priorities defined in the theory of change; and
 - (iii) the criteria defined by young people (see the above table).

A. Scenario 1: Creating a new rural youth advisory council

24. Creating a new rural youth advisory council would be one way of providing a participatory structure for the formation of committees to discuss community issues.¹¹ Such councils generally have formal hierarchical governance structures. If a new council were to be set up, it would need to have clear objectives, functions and

¹¹ H. Matthews (2001).

selection criteria, together with a strategic framework, governance system and road map. The key strengths of such a new structure would be that it could establish: (i) a clear line of management and internal configurations; (ii) appropriate arrangements for coordination, strategic planning and communication; (iii) clear-cut responsibilities and operational roles for members; and (iv) functions and structures that would be tailored to IFAD.

25. This approach has some shortcomings as a channel for voices at the grass-roots level, however. While youth councils have proved to be effective ways to promote youth participation,¹² they tend to have a relatively narrow scope of action and to be largely headquarter-based and thus more removed from youth realities.¹³ They thus pose the risk of engendering a “youth elite” which may not be fully representative of youth at the grass-roots level.

B. Scenario 2: Working with existing youth councils

26. A number of United Nations entities have already established youth councils that have committees which could participate in some IFAD activities. In this scenario, IFAD would partner with existing youth councils to conduct joint activities and advocacy. This course of action would enable IFAD to engage with youth representatives in existing council structures right away. It would also help the Fund to deepen its knowledge of youth issues, provided that these councils are genuinely able to reach out to poor rural youth on an ongoing basis and to respond to their differentiated and ever-evolving needs. This option could be easier to implement than the option provided for under Scenario 1, as it would save IFAD from having to undertake the lengthy process of establishing its own council from scratch.
27. The key challenge for IFAD in this scenario would be to ensure meaningful engagement of youth at the grass-roots level. The main focus of existing councils of this type tends to be on policy dialogue, advocacy and other policy initiatives at the regional and global levels, where such processes rarely trigger action on the ground. This runs counter to the desire expressed by young people for a strong field-level focus and grass-roots organization, which are a critical missing element in existing youth participation frameworks.

C. Scenario 3: Pursuing dynamic engagement with existing youth-based platforms and networks

28. Under Scenario 3, IFAD would engage in less formal thematic spaces characterized by loose relationships¹⁴ and horizontal structures arising from the more or less spontaneous convergence of youth activists. Members would harness the process of networking to attain benefits but “having a common purpose is what makes it a network, not simply networking”.¹⁵ These entities (networks, platforms, forums, thematic working groups, etc.) can be engaged with in an ad hoc manner in ways that are most relevant to their work. They are usually not legal entities but rather informal learning spaces.
29. The advantage of this option is that it is flexible and can be tailored to contextual technical demands. It would also require the Fund to engage with a large number of people with diverse experiences and kinds of know-how in order to increase outreach potential and mitigate the risk of creating an elite youth group. The disadvantage is that it would be difficult for any organization to align this scenario with its planning cycle. The ad hoc and changeable nature of such networks would make it difficult for IFAD to systematically engage with rural youth and for any structured field operation to count on their availability to mobilize and channel rural youth voices into programme work. It is less suited to engagement with hard-to-reach rural young people who, without support, may not be able to make

¹² United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2009).

¹³ Evaluation Office of United Nations Environment Programme (2016), Refugees International (2019), UNESCO (2017), UN-HABITAT (2011).

¹⁴ J.M. Bryson, B.C. Crosby and M.M. Stone (2006).

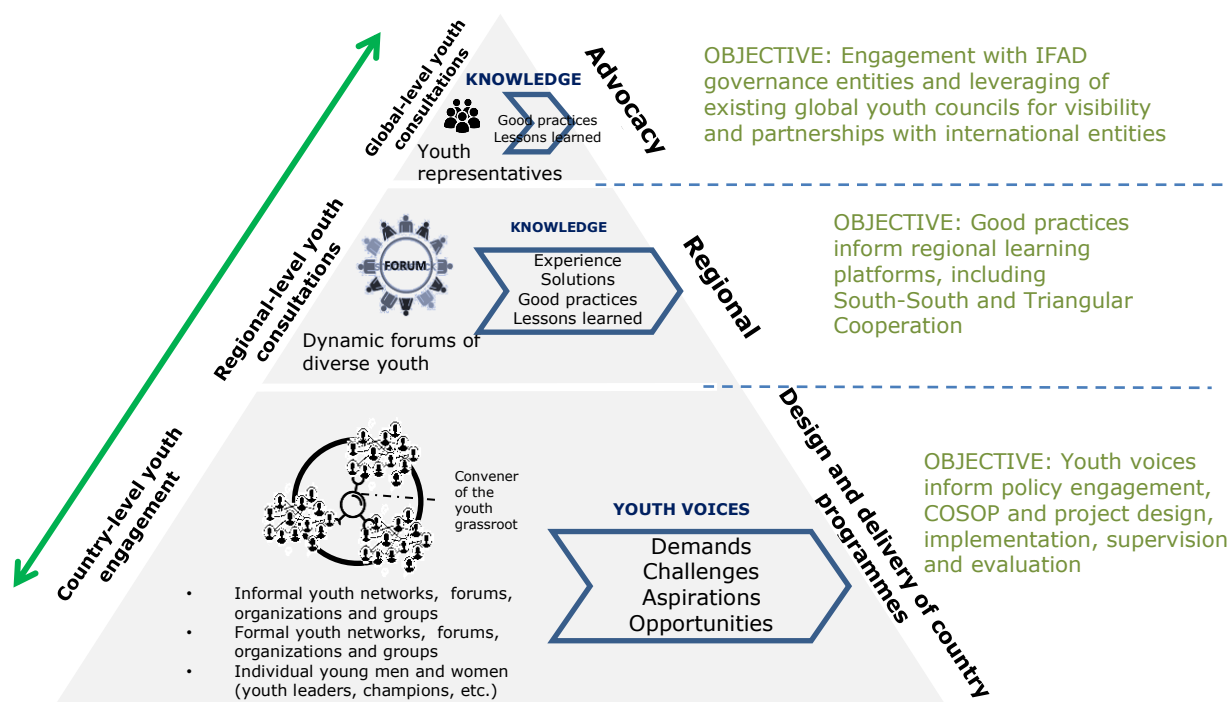
¹⁵ Terri Willard and Heather Creech (2006).

their voices heard. It is also hard to establish partnerships with such highly informal entities that lack a legally constituted structure.

D. Scenario 4: A grass-roots approach for connecting youth voices to action

30. In Scenario 4, the emphasis is on the grass-roots level – where the major gap in youth engagement currently exists. Youth demands, aspirations, challenges and solutions would be systematically captured through dynamic youth-focused interaction. This option would leverage the advantages associated with Scenario 2 (working with existing youth councils), since its highly operational orientation and focus on the work being done on the ground would be complemented by the work of existing global councils.
31. As illustrated in figure 3, the idea would be to aggregate the fragmented voices of young people at the grass-roots level and to promote varying degrees of interaction with youth at all three levels (the grass-roots, regional and global levels) who are performing a range of differing roles depending on their interests and priorities. The most intense interactions would be at the grass-roots and country levels, where youth from different backgrounds – including hard-to-reach youth and young people from semi-rural and peri-urban areas – would share ideas, resources and experiences on a systematic yet flexible basis which would inform all aspects of country programming work and help to shape the approach in a way that would match the context in each case.

Figure 3



A grass-roots approach to engaging with youth

32. Scenario 4 would entail a shift in the way that the Fund engages with youth in country programming work in order to optimize the involvement of youth without creating new structures from scratch. The dynamic and flexible nature of this option would make it possible to tailor the approach on a country-by-country basis while building on existing good practices and working with youth entities to enhance the quality of youth-sensitive country programme delivery.

33. Under this scenario, voice inclusivity would be achieved at the grass-roots level and would be coupled with a strong potential for the convergence of youth ideas in the rural space to contribute to rural transformation through, for example, new grass-roots youth alliances for development or communities of practice. Multiple entry points for youth throughout country programme cycles could be activated whenever an identified need or opportunity arose.
34. At the regional level, linkages could be established with hubs to help take advantage of field-based knowledge and good practices to inform investment delivery. Regional platforms such as SSTC could be leveraged to promote intraregional and interregional learning. Synergies with existing regional and thematic networks and web resources could be explored.¹⁶
35. Learning outputs about what works for youth constitute a solid evidence base that could be shared at the global level. Success stories by youth for youth could inform IFAD deliberations in Executive Board and Governing Council meetings. Linking to international youth entities such as the Rome-based agencies' (RBAs) Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger and ECOSOC would offer a valuable opportunity for joint advocacy on youth issues.
36. The main added value of this option is that it has a strong grass-roots operational focus and would complement ongoing work with regional and international bodies that support young people's efforts to advocate for the youth agenda. A continuous learning loop would inform IFAD programming in ways that would make it more responsive to youth and would ultimately lead to a greater internalization of youth-sensitive programming capacities at IFAD while at the same time galvanizing the engagement of grass-roots youth groups with IFAD and governments.
37. The main challenges envisaged under Scenario 4 have to do with the fact that this option would represent a significant innovation. While IFAD already embraces youth mainstreaming as a priority, it would gradually have to internalize this approach in its decentralized structure. This would require country teams to extend their outreach work and listen more to youth, a process that would take time and patience. In addition, the emergency situation created by the COVID-19 crisis and the accompanying restrictions on people's movements will certainly pose new challenges. Coping strategies such as the digitization of youth mobilization and aggregation strategies have been considered for application under this grass-roots approach.
38. The implementation of this option could be phased in as part of a gradual roll-out to allow IFAD staff to learn how the practices involved in listening to rural youth can become a standard part of country programming work. It could be piloted in five countries, one in each region, in order to identify and manage any deficiencies or bottlenecks that may be encountered before committing further resources to the expansion of its application during IFAD12. The evaluation of the pilot would generate lessons and evidence of the value of youth voices in a constructive dialogue leading towards rural transformation.
39. Country programmes would then eventually facilitate ongoing engagement with youth in a diversity of formations at the grass-roots level during project cycles and delivery processes. This practice could be nurtured, internalized and systematized in order to support the strategic role that youth could play as active partners in project delivery.

E. Monitoring

40. Monitoring will be conducted within the framework of the RYAP. The overall effectiveness of its contribution will be measured against the most relevant outputs and outcome targets identified for the RYAP. Existing corporate tracking systems will be leveraged for the measurement and verification of associated indicators, including

¹⁶ FIDAMERICA in the Latin America and Caribbean region, FIDAFRIQUE in the West and Central Africa region, Knowledge Networking for Rural Development in the Asia and Pacific region, Knowledge Access in Rural Interconnected Areas Network in the Near East, North Africa and Europe region and the Rural Solutions Portal.

Quality Assurance Group indicators that are designed to ensure quality at entrance and are used for the overall ranking of programme/project design maturity.

F. Cost estimates

41. Table 2 below summarizes the estimated cost of establishing the mechanism under each scenario during the first year of implementation only. Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 are characterized by a global approach in which the bulk of the activities would be focused on global advocacy or advising functions relating to key corporate processes. Scenario 3 focuses on tapping into youth resources in existing regional networks. Scenario 4 entails a pure grass-roots-driven approach intended to fill a crucial gap in the mobilization of youth voices at the local level and the promotion of their engagement with country programmes.

Table 2

Cost estimates

(Costs in United States dollars)

	Scenario 1		Scenario 2		Scenario 3		Scenario 4	
	<i>Creating a new rural youth advisory council</i>		<i>Working with existing youth councils</i>		<i>Engaging with existing youth-based platforms and networks</i>		<i>Taking a grass-roots approach</i>	
Global level	Activities	30 000	Activities	5 000	Activities	5 000	Activities	5 000
Regional level	Activities	10 000	Activities	20 000	Activities	20 000	Activities	5 000
Grass-roots level	Activities	5 000	Activities	5 000	Activities	5 000	Activities	35 000
Total		45 000		30 000		30 000		45 000

V. Conclusion and next steps

42. A dedicated youth approach is required to enable young people to directly contribute to IFAD's work at multiple levels. The young people who were consulted were unequivocal in stating that they want a grass-roots approach that delivers concrete actions and real benefits for them as active development partners on the ground. They also want to contribute to regional and global advocacy efforts dealing with certain ideals which could add value to grass-roots action.
43. Scenario 4 offers a new way to mobilize and aggregate youth voices at the grass-roots level and effectively channel them into IFAD decision-making processes. This option would fill a crucial gap at the grass-roots level and would catalyse pragmatic, organized involvement in IFAD operations at the country level. It would also provide an opportunity for young people to make their voices heard at the regional and international levels through IFAD's decision-making processes or through existing youth councils, platforms and forums.

A. Design and implementation of a grass-roots approach

44. A summary of the design of the grass-roots approach envisioned under Scenario 4, including the key building blocks and implementation arrangements, is presented in annex 1.¹⁷ Critical elements at the grass-roots level include mobilizing and aggregating youth voices around formal and informal autonomous self-managed entities and individuals and presenting young people with safe spaces for peer learning and self-empowerment and with flash points that can be used as an opportunity for all young people to reach a common understanding about how youth should be represented in development initiatives.
45. Implementation will be a bottom-up process that will be phased in step by step, starting with a pilot in five countries that will then gradually be expanded to include other countries following an evaluation of that pilot. Partnership-building with existing youth-led organizations (e.g. a memorandum of understanding with the RBA Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger) and others will be pursued in order to leverage

¹⁷ The full document is available upon request.

programmatic synergies and facilitate rural youth representation in policy and strategic processes. Capacity development for youth will be crucial for the successful implementation of this initiative, together with ongoing attention to gender and diversity. The internalization of this approach in IFAD, coupled with partnership-building, will enhance its sustainability.

B. Next steps and milestones

46. The steps completed so far include:
 - (i) Finalization of the position paper (April/May 2020);
 - (ii) Feedback from IFAD's Executive Board (May 2020); and
 - (iii) Design of the grass-roots approach (June 2020).¹⁸
47. The Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) will work with designated regional youth focal points and country programme officers to:
 - (i) Set up the grass-roots approach and prepare for the implementation of the pilot phase (October 2020–December 2021); and
 - (ii) Carry out an evaluation of the pilot phase, including a cost-benefit analysis, prior to the gradual roll-out to other countries (January 2022 - 2025).
48. ECG will facilitate implementation with youth partners at the grass-roots level who will select a convenor among themselves to coordinate mobilization. Regional youth focal points will support ECG as liaisons for the internal coordination of the hubs' contributions to the process. Country programme officers will serve as key interlocutors linking youth partners with the IFAD Country Offices and project management units.
49. ECG will use the non-staff budget for these activities. Once the initiative is fully operational, the ECG will also consider using grant funding to further support grass-roots youth actors and systemize their involvement in IFAD decision-making processes. The mobilization of supplementary funds and the attraction of cofinancing from Member States (including their private sectors) will be pursued based on country-specific conditions.

¹⁸ Discussions with key stakeholders are still ongoing and the full design document will therefore be fine-tuned accordingly during the coming months.

Table 3
Completed activities and milestones

Completed activities	April 2020 - June 2020 - ECG (youth team)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2020: Position paper submitted to Operations Management Ccommittee. • May 2020: Submission to Executive Management Committee for review. • May 2020: E-consultation with Executive Board members on 26 May 2020. 	
Preparatory activities	June 2020 - September 2020 - ECG (youth team)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June - September 2020: Position paper (incorporating Executive Board comments and inputs received from the Youth Council for Zero Hunger) and the design of Scenario 4 submitted to the Executive Board for information. • A memorandum of understanding concluded with the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger formalizing complementarities and synergies for increasing rural youth voices in the global space. • Joint activities with the Youth Council for Zero Hunger. 	
Piloting, roll-out and launch	October 2020 - December 2021 - ECG (youth team) / hubs /IFAD Country Offices/youth stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2020: ECG, hub focal points and youth stakeholders engage in discussions to agree on implementation. • October/December 2020: Setting up of grass-roots youth alliances for development in the pilot countries. • January 2021: A capacity-building plan for youth members of the alliances is developed. • February/June 2021: Capacity-building of grass-roots youth alliance representatives. • June/August 2021: Launch of the grass-roots youth approach. • December 2021: Evaluation of piloting phase. • January 2022 and beyond: Gradual scaling up of what works to other countries. 	

A grass-roots approach to connecting youth voices to action (summary of the design document)¹⁹

I. Building blocks

A. A bottom-up approach

- This approach will facilitate the establishment of a mechanism that connects young women and men at the grass-roots level and that will systematically capture youth demands, aspirations, challenges and solutions to inform IFAD programmes. These young women and men will share ideas, resources and experiences in a systematic yet flexible manner and engage in IFAD's operations as active partners.
- The adoption of a bottom-up approach will provide a means of opening up the dialogue and making the process accessible to young people from many diverse backgrounds, with the result being a more equitable and participatory framework. This will also increase ownership and mutual accountability for making progress in achieving development results: if young people feel more involved at the grass-roots level, they will be empowered to take ownership of their own community's and country's development. This will help to ensure the long-term sustainability of results while also driving forward the modernization of approaches and tools by making it possible to tap into human capital reserves and the pool of innovative ideas. This bottom-up approach will make it possible to harness the full power of young people's combined knowledge and to break down silos.
- Connecting up young people also opens up an opportunity to build their capacities for engaging with local institutions and the private sector. The intent is not to create new structures, but to build on existing engagement practices while tailoring the approach to each country context and devoting particular attention to rural women and other dimensions of intersectionality in order to ensure inclusiveness.
- This approach will also facilitate the exploration and formation of linkages with existing youth-led organizations at the regional and global levels (e.g. the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger), youth engagement in policy processes, and knowledge-sharing and learning through South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).

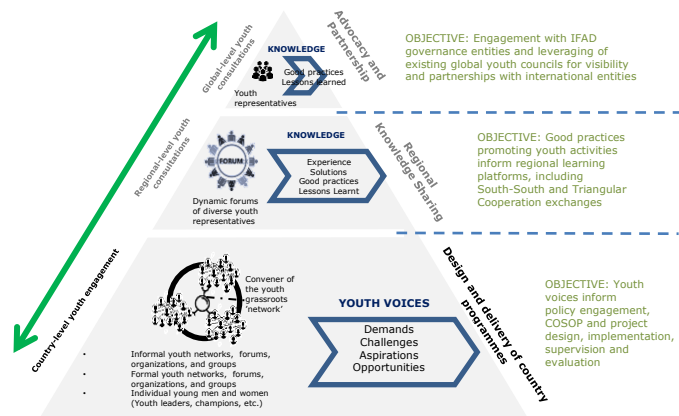


Figure 1. Framework of the grassroots

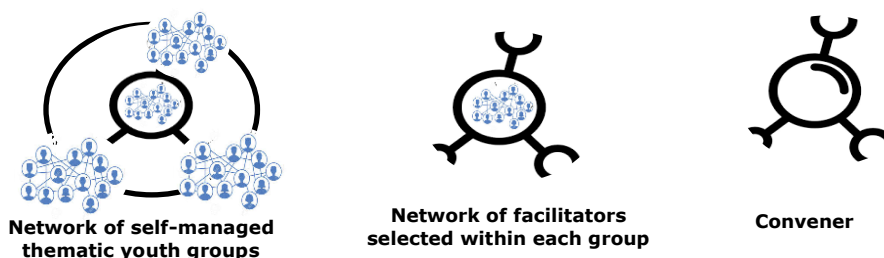
B. Framework for the grass-roots approach

- Figure 1 presents the main components of the mobilization and aggregation framework: (i) a grass-roots network of autonomous, self-managed groups and a convening organization; and (ii) three levels of youth engagement (national, regional and global levels).
- The organizational and governance model cannot be imposed but will instead need to be shaped by and with young people. While the mobilization and aggregation model will be determined on the basis of each national context and will also be shaped by and with young people, some preferences have emerged during the youth consultations, including:

¹⁹ The full document is available upon request.

- (i) Thematic and geographic groups that are safe spaces for peer learning and self-empowerment and flash points for all youth engagement initiatives. Members will decide on the issues to be addressed in their respective regions so as to allow for the adoption of differentiated approaches. They may also draw up a charter that sets out their common values and goals.

Figure 2

Main components of the mobilization and aggregation framework

- (ii) Clear member selection criteria that support inclusiveness and are gender-sensitive (e.g. willingness to share and contribute, age, residence and place of work, agriculture-related activity).
- (iii) Shared governance (i.e. decentralized decision-making), with everyone having a voice and an opportunity to act based on each person's competencies within a framework based on trust, common values and agreed group objectives.
- (iv) A choice of appropriate means of communication that are accessible to all (e.g. telephones, radios, social media and the use of other information and communication technologies, depending on the context).
- (v) The selection of facilitators who can liaison between the groups and IFAD, thereby ensuring a two-way flow of information.
- (vi) The participatory selection²⁰ of a convening organization to support the operationalization of the grass-roots engagement mechanism.
7. A gender analysis will be carried out during the mobilization phase and will be of critical importance in informing the structure and governance models and processes needed to address the potential challenges faced by young women (e.g. time, mobility).

C. Three levels of engagement

8. At the country level, young people will engage with IFAD as advisers, service providers and/or beneficiaries to improve the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes (youth accountability) and as advocates in national policy dialogues representing the interests of rural youth.
9. At the regional level, young people will engage with IFAD's regional hubs for purposes of knowledge-sharing, peer learning about what works and what does not, and leveraging regional platforms, SSTC, IFAD web platforms²¹ and youth forums (e.g. the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Youth Forum, the Caribbean Agri-Youth Forum) and will participate in policy processes and consultations.

²⁰ The convening organization should be mature and have sufficient experience with (or a strong commitment to) rural youth empowerment. Trust will be a crucial aspect, and a capacity assessment will need to be undertaken.

²¹ FIDAMERICA, FIDAFRIQUE, Electronic Networking for Rural Development in Asia-Pacific Region, Knowledge Access in Rural Interconnected Areas Network, Rural Solution Portal.

10. At the global level, youth engagement with IFAD governance entities will inform investment and policy decisions, and young people will have opportunities to contribute in their own words to global multi-stakeholder dialogues and to leverage global youth councils (e.g. the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger).

II. Implementation arrangements

11. The youth engagement mechanism will be implemented using a bottom-up, phased approach (piloted in five countries, with evaluation and cost-benefit analyses prior to scaling up). This mechanism will enable horizontal and vertical formal and informal interactions among youth, IFAD and other actors from the grass-roots to the global levels (figure 3).

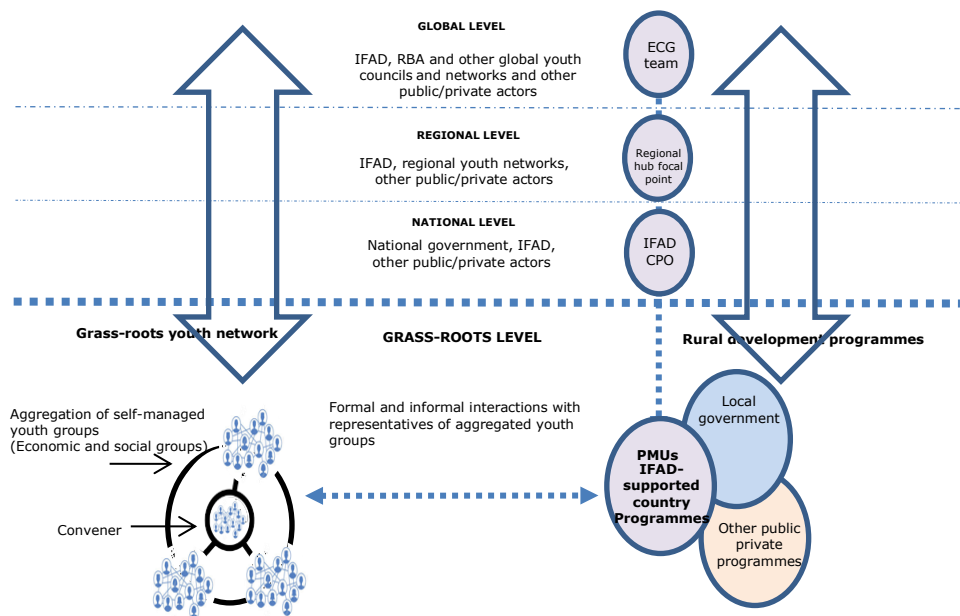


Figure 3. Horizontal and vertical interactions

A. Roles of IFAD, youth and other actors²²

12. The corresponding IFAD country team will support the implementation of the approach in each of the countries where it is being piloted. Those teams will engage with youth groups in connection with programmatic activities and will facilitate the participation of rural youth representatives in national policy processes. The regional hubs will coordinate knowledge-sharing and ensure that rural youth voices are embedded in regional agendas. ECG youth teams will support all preparatory work, develop partnerships with youth-led organizations, RBAs and other partners, and invite youth to provide inputs for IFAD governing entities.
13. Young people will reach agreement on common values, objectives and a governance model and processes for the selection of facilitators and communication channels for responding to requests from IFAD and others and for the selection of the convening organization. At the national, regional and global levels, young people who have been selected by these groups will represent the interests of young rural women and men in policy dialogues and consultations, will contribute to advocacy instruments and will help to leverage existing youth-led platforms, councils and farmers' umbrella organizations, as needed.
14. Other actors (governments, development organizations, RBAs, the private sector) may engage with the grass-roots youth networks in various ways (see the table below).

²² A detailed description of the roles of each stakeholder is presented in the full version of the design document.

Table 1
Engagement with grass-roots youth networks

Level	IFAD	Youth	Other actors
Grass-roots / National	<p>Project Management Unit (PMU)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate and support mobilization, aggregation and roll-out. <p>Country programme manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the PMU to support the establishment of the mechanism. Engage with youth groups broadly or in connection with specific programmatic activities. Facilitate linkages with existing national youth networks for their engagement in national policy processes. 	<p>Members of the mechanism will agree on common objectives, a governance model and processes, participate in meetings and engage with IFAD and others, as appropriate</p> <p>Selected facilitators and representatives will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) facilitate exchanges and coordination between groups; (ii) share information and knowledge about what rural youth need in order to engage in agriculture and agribusiness activities; (iii) participate in IFAD operations and make recommendations as needed; (iv) represent the interests of rural young people in national policy dialogues. 	<p>Other institutions may engage with grass-roots youth networks at different levels and in different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inviting youth to share their views on agricultural development, employment creation, agribusiness, etc. Entering into contractual arrangements with young people to draw on their expertise. Using the network to disseminate information that could be of benefit to rural youth. <p>Regional and global youth-led platforms and networks may also call on the grass-roots youth network to help them make their voices heard in multi-stakeholder spaces.</p>
Regional	<p>Regional hub focal point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with ECG youth teams and coordinate the hubs' contributions to the process. Ensure that youth voices are embedded in the agendas of regional processes and opportunities to engage in SSTC programmes. 	<p>Selected representatives will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) share lessons learned and good practices acquired at the grass-roots level; (ii) participate in youth-to-youth knowledge exchanges; (iii) represent the interests of young rural people in regional policy dialogues and regional consultations; (iv) contribute to advocacy instruments. 	
Global	<p>ECG youth teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the implementation of the phased approach at the different levels Work closely with and support regional focal points, social inclusion officers and country programme officers (provide oversight of all preparatory work). When needed, invite youth to provide inputs for IFAD governing entities or special global advocacy events. 	<p>Selected representatives will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) share lessons learned and good practices acquired at the grass-roots level; (ii) represent the interests of young rural people in IFAD governance bodies and in global policy dialogues; (iii) contribute to advocacy instruments. 	

B. Stages of implementation

15. Setting up the youth engagement approach (October 2020-December 2021):

- (i) Mapping and mobilization of young women and men and youth organizations in pilot-project countries, including a gender analysis and participatory identification of a convening organization.

- (ii) Mobilized youth start the process of setting up their collective mechanism with the support of local and national partners and agree on workflows and processes.
- (iii) The capacities of youth, the convener and project staff are assessed in light of the roles they will be playing. A capacity-building plan is developed that takes into account the situations of rural youth, in particular young women, and their potential constraints (e.g. time, mobility).
- (iv) At the regional and global levels, mapping and identification of synergies with organizations that can be leveraged for youth-to-youth knowledge exchange (SSTC) and advocacy purposes, development of partnerships (e.g. memorandum of understanding with the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger)²³ and knowledge products, and capacity-building of youth representatives to support their meaningful participation in consultations and policy processes.

16. Evaluation of the piloting phase (December 2021) and scaling up (January 2022):

- (i) The evaluation will be based on indicators in line with the Rural Youth Action Plan (RYAP) and informed by young people. It will include a cost-benefit analysis aimed at finding the most efficient pathways for scaling up and determining the social and economic returns on investments.
- (ii) The scaling up strategy will also draw on inputs from other youth platforms that will be crucial allies in rolling out this approach to other countries.

C. Sustainability

- 17. Factors supporting institutional sustainability will include a sense of ownership and trust, voluntarism, an understanding of the benefits of aggregation (e.g. social capital, access to resources), the capacity of facilitators to connect with the groups that they are working with and the presence of a trusted and capacitated convener.
- 18. Based on lessons learned from the pilot phase, engagement with rural youth will be internalized in all IFAD operational guidelines so that the Fund's programmes will be more effective in meeting the needs of rural youth.
- 19. Financial sustainability will be based on the provision of human resources from the host institution, opportunities for obtaining IFAD grant funding, cofinancing from partners and crowdfunding campaigns. In addition, the capacity-building and mentoring of youth in order to help them to develop mature business plans will increase their opportunities for accessing funding (e.g. the Agribusiness Capital Fund, private sector trust funds and other private funds).

D. Monitoring

- 20. Monitoring will be conducted within the framework of the RYAP outputs and outcome targets identified under action area 4 of the RYAP. Existing corporate tracking systems will be leveraged for the measurement and verification of associated indicators, while consultations with rural youth will take place throughout the project cycle and will be embedded in the IFAD operational feedback process.

²³ Areas for collaboration include mapping of youth organizations, peer reviewing of strategic documents, knowledge products and advocacy.

Logical framework and budget

Outcomes and outputs	Indicators (All indicators need to be calculated on a sex-disaggregated basis)	Means of verification
<p>Outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective participation of young rural women and men in IFAD operations and decision-making processes (linked to RYAP action area 4). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. inputs included in IFAD decision-making processes at its headquarters and hubs and at the country level. % of youth-sensitive projects with higher Quality Assurance Group (QAG) ratings.²⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COSOP and country strategy note reviews. Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems. QAG ratings. Reports on engagement with youth at the grass-roots level.
<p>Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grass-roots youth engagement approach has been operationalized. Rural young women and men have been trained and are organized. IFAD staff and implementing partners are capacitated to engage with rural youth. Rural youth are active participants in regional and global processes (e.g. through partnerships with youth-led organizations). New partnerships have been established. Evidence-based knowledge is being produced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. youth mobilized and engaged in the grass-roots mechanism (% rural youth/peri-urban and urban youth). No. rural youth trained / how new skills and capacities have benefited youth individually and collectively. No. of staff and implementing partners trained. No. rural youth who have participated in regional and global processes. No. new or strengthened partnerships. No. knowledge products developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position paper and design of grass-roots approach validated by the Executive Board of IFAD. Grass-roots youth e-platform. Documents about the governance structure and processes of the grass-roots mechanism. Agreement between grass-roots mechanism and IFAD. Training surveys. Knowledge products. Memorandum of understanding.

²⁴ With respect to 2019 and 2020 ratings.

Revised summary budget²⁵ (based on Scenario 4 and some elements of Scenario 2)

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Budget in United States dollars</i>
Grass-roots/ National	Mapping, mobilization to targeted and aggregate rural youth entities.	8 000
National	Setting up of grass-roots youth alliances in five pilot-project countries and identification of the host organization / convener.	10 000
	Capacity development (assessment, plan, delivery), including online training modules.	10 000
	Engagement with country programmes at the local and national levels combined with supervision and implementation support (travel).	7 000
Total		35 000
Regional	Preparatory activities for setting up alliances at the regional level and coordination with hub focal points.	2 000
	Participation in field-based exchanges of knowledge and good practices, SSTC-based intraregional and interregional learning, selected events for advocacy and knowledge products.	8 000
Total		10 000
Global	Support for youth participation in joint advocacy and communication activities and partnership-building and coordination of joint activities.	5 000
Total		5 000
TOTAL		50 000

²⁵ Note: The budget does not include the evaluation of the approach.

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