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## **Summary of Project and Programme Proposals discussed at the Executive Board Consultation held on 6 September 2021**

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**For: Review**

## Summary of Project and Programme Proposals discussed at the Executive Board Consultation held on 6 September 2021

### I. Introduction

1. In line with recent practice, a session was held to enable Executive Board representatives to hold an in-depth discussion on country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and project proposals in advance of the upcoming 133<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Board. Discussions at the session covered the COSOP for Madagascar and proposals for projects in Chad, Congo and Rwanda. Proposals for projects in Pakistan and Viet Nam had also been scheduled for the meeting but were removed due to delays in obtaining administrative clearances from the respective Governments. They will now be presented to the Board at the 134<sup>th</sup> session to be held in December.
2. In attendance at the session were representatives from 18 Executive Board countries and a further eight representatives from other IFAD Member States, including representatives for the four countries of the proposals under discussion.<sup>1</sup> The consultation was chaired by the Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department, and attended by the directors of the concerned regional divisions, the Secretary of IFAD and other IFAD staff.
3. Before the discussion began, the session Chair announced that the financing agreement for the Northeastern Small Producers Economic and Social Inclusion Project (PROINORTE) in Honduras had been signed, following Executive Board approval of two extensions in the deadline for countersignature of the agreement by the Government.
4. The proposals are notable for their coverage of fragile areas of many kinds, including southern Madagascar, which is currently suffering from a climate-fuelled famine, as well as Chad and Congo, which are both included in the World Bank list of fragile and conflict-affected states. During the discussion, Management confirmed that IFAD's extensive, and growing, experience in operating in fragile situations means that it is becoming increasingly well-equipped to manage them, in collaboration with Governments and other partners, and also highlighted the value of the lessons drawn from implementing remote project supervision during the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. Overall, representatives were supportive of the proposals, and the discussions gave Management the opportunity to clarify and think through important aspects of the operations under discussion. Along with interesting discussions on integrating agroecology activities into designs and promoting market access, a key theme during the discussions related to results measurement. For the project in Congo, for instance, Management confirmed that they are working closely with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to effectively capture the project's impacts on greenhouse gas emissions. In the case of the project in Chad, there was a fruitful discussion on measuring the sustainability of agribusinesses, during which Management agreed to employ a range of indicators to effectively capture this variable. Finally, for the project in Rwanda, Management indicated the intention to integrate the newly developed resilience scorecard to capture the project's impacts in the drought-prone Kayonza district.

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<sup>1</sup> Executive Board representatives: Angola, Argentina, Austria, China, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Other Member States: Cabo Verde, Chad, Congo, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Madagascar, Rwanda and Sri Lanka.

6. The main points brought forward during the discussions are summarized below for the review of Members before the 133<sup>rd</sup> session of the Executive Board. This document will be updated after the session to reflect any additional comments made by representatives at that time.

## **II. Summary of proposals and discussions**

### **A. East and Southern Africa**

#### **Madagascar: Country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) (EB 2021/133/R.21)/country strategy and programme evaluation (CSPE) (EB 2021/133/R.19)**

7. This COSOP for 2022-2026 aims to address several causes of fragility, including the climate-fuelled food crisis in the southern regions of the country, weak rural institutions and the youth bulge. The COSOP focuses on 12 regions in the south and targets 430,000 people in total. It was informed by the second CSPE for the country, covering the period 2013-2019, which was generally positive although with sustainability as a noted weakness. The COSOP internalizes the five CSPE recommendations and the strategic objectives of the Government. The COSOP is guided by the following strategic objectives: (i) improve climate-resilient production systems; and (ii) strengthen agricultural value chains and promote improved access to inclusive finance. The representative of the Government of Madagascar provided a statement confirming the COSOP's full alignment with national policy objectives.
8. As well as strong appreciation for the focus on climate-resilient production systems, the comments made by representatives during the discussion focused on coordination with other development partners, the prospects for funding from the enhanced Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP+) and the promotion of agroecology. Reference was made to the CSPE recommendation, on the need for disaggregated indicators. In response, Management explained that they are working hard to coordinate with other partners, including by participating in several working groups, and are upgrading the country presence to a country director-led office. Management also confirmed that Madagascar is a strong candidate for ASAP+ funding, and that the country team will continue to look for tailored and effective ways to invest in agroecology practices during the COSOP period.

#### **Rwanda: Kayonza Irrigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project - Phase II (EB 2021/133/R.28)**

9. This project will target 40,000 households in nine drought-prone sectors of the Kayonza District using IFAD financing of US\$21.7 million and building upon the first phase of the project that is due to complete next year. The project activities will focus on strengthening resilience to drought and supporting farm business development, complemented by institutional development. The Government of Spain is providing US\$28 million in cofinancing for the project, and the representative for Spain gave a statement in support of the project and acknowledged the benefits of continuity through this second phase. The representative of the Government of Rwanda confirmed that the project is fully aligned with national priorities on promoting the empowerment of women and youth, and supporting market linkages through cooperatives.
10. The main points of clarification requested during the discussion related to the outreach figures, how local marketing challenges would be overcome, the use of climate information services, the need to analyse local climate trends and how resilience results will be measured. In response, Management clarified that the project will overcome marketing challenges by building the capacity of cooperatives, linking them with private sector actors and financial service providers, and leveraging partnerships. Furthermore, climate information services

would be provided through farmer field schools and by leveraging the partnership with the Rwanda Meteorology Agency that had been beneficial in the case of another recently completed IFAD project. They added that they would seek to strengthen the climate data analysis as part of the Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP) and, in terms of monitoring, are intending to utilize the newly developed resilience scorecard. The representative of Rwanda also reiterated the Government's commitment to results-based management. Management confirmed that they would respond in writing to clarify the outreach figures.

## **B. West and Central Africa**

### **Chad: Project to Strengthen Agropastoral Entrepreneurship Innovation for Youth and Women (EB 2021/133/R.29)**

11. This project will target 82,000 people in nine districts of the country utilizing EUR 22.9 million in IFAD funds combined with EUR 26.3 million from the Green Climate Fund (GCF), EUR 9.2 million from the Government of Chad and EUR 5 million from beneficiaries. The project will seek to develop profitable and resilient agro-enterprises and a strong supporting ecosystem, including providing affordable credit and promoting climate change adaptation and low-emission practices and technologies. The presentation of the project by the Regional Director was followed by an endorsement of the project by the representative of the Government of Chad.
12. Questions from representatives focused on the potential challenges to implementation of the current governance arrangement in the country and the fragility of some project areas, as well as how regions were selected, the use of business incubators and how the challenge of promoting sustainable agribusiness microenterprises will be overcome (and monitored). In response, the representative of the Government of Chad and Management confirmed that they do not anticipate any changes in Government to affect the project nor do they anticipate any budget support issues, adding that lessons from operating during COVID-19 and in other fragile situations will be employed to ensure strong implementation and monitoring. Management also explained that targeting was based on poverty mapping, service provider facilitation and self-targeting mechanisms. On business sustainability, it was explained that business incubators are being used because they are well suited to the context, and that a solid strategy will be implemented to promote sustainability and monitor results. The benefits of the support provided to rural youth even if their businesses fail was also highlighted.

### **Congo: Youth, Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Support Project (EB 2021/133/R.30)**

13. This project will aim to reach 127,000 people in the southern departments of the country using EUR 12.9 million in IFAD funds, combined with US\$7.4 million in domestic cofinancing. Activities will focus on strengthening agricultural supply chains and improving the access of agricultural value chain actors to financial services, and will include supporting small and medium-sized agribusinesses and promoting public-private-producer networks to create an enabling environment for the agrifood sector.
14. During the discussion, representatives asked whether reduced emissions would be included in the results framework, and asked for clarification on the financing terms. Management confirmed that reduced emissions will be included in the project's logical framework and that the project team is already working with FAO to calculate the potential impact of the project on emissions. This is part of the project's link with a GCF-funded project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from forests in the country, which will be managed by FAO. The representative of Congo also gave a statement reiterating the Government's commitment to limit the

country's carbon footprint, including regulating deforestation and promoting climate-smart agriculture, and confirmed the project's alignment with those objectives. On the financing terms. Management confirmed that the lending terms are aligned with the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund.