
Summary of project and programme proposals discussed at the Executive Board consultation held on 2 December 2022

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I. Introduction

1. On 2 December, the Executive Board met virtually for a formal consultation on the batch of country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and projects to be presented at the 137th Executive Board in December, rounding up the pipeline for the first year of the Twelfth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD12). The consultation was held to enable the Member States to engage in an in-depth discussion on the COSOPs and projects ahead of the Board session. The consultation complements the individual written comments shared by the Membership with country teams, to which country teams provide written responses.
2. The items discussed included the COSOPs for Indonesia, Pakistan and Uzbekistan; and sovereign lending projects for Cambodia, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Zimbabwe.
3. Fourteen Executive Board representatives attended the session,¹ and a further 8² Member State representatives, including countries that had an item on the agenda, namely Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Madagascar, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe. The consultation was chaired by the Associate Vice-President, Programme Management Department and attended by the Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department; the Director, Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD and selected staff; relevant division directors, country directors, project technical leads; the Secretary of IFAD and other IFAD staff.
4. The consultation was held in two segments. Items were grouped by region to allow sufficient time for discussion. In the morning segment, the Membership discussed two COSOPs and one project from the Asia and the Pacific region, and one COSOP from the North Africa, Near East and Central Asia region. In the afternoon, six sovereign lending projects were discussed from the West and Central Africa and the Eastern and Southern Africa regions. Due to circumstances beyond IFAD's control, the Lesotho project, planned for submission this December, had to be moved to the Board session May 2023. It was therefore dropped from the agenda.
5. The Chair commented on the high volume of financing being presented to the December session and noted that with the approval of the present batch of projects, IFAD would have delivered a pipeline of US\$902 million and a total programme of work of US\$2.35 billion in 2022.
6. Overall, representatives were supportive of the COSOPs and the projects. A key cross-cutting theme was support to institutional capacity-building through IFAD projects. Management responded that while investments certainly focused on strengthening the institutional capacity of the technical line departments, IFAD was also providing fiduciary and management capacity support, both through project financing and through grants, especially on procurement, financial management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) aspects. However, Management pointed out that there were constraints as to how much could be done with the reduced grant resources and noted the difficulties of retaining trained project management unit staff given the higher wages available elsewhere.

¹ Executive Board representatives for Austria, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, France, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

² Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe.

7. Member States also enquired about promoting effective South-South Cooperation through IFAD's programmes and projects. Management responded that while more could be done, since the approval of IFAD's South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) Strategy in December 2021, progress had been made in implementing the strategy, such as ensuring that 13 new COSOPs had a greater focus on SSTC, and launching a third call for proposals under the China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility, which has to date directed US\$8.5 million to 16 projects. Management noted that without additional grant resources for this work, support through project activities and budgets would be limited.
8. With regard to the projects in fragile contexts, namely in Ethiopia and Mali, Member States asked about implementation of project activities through government institutions in conflict-affected areas and the mitigation actions envisaged for foreseen risks, including community involvement and local implementation. Management responded that strict assessments would be undertaken to ensure a conducive environment before making investments in high-risk project areas and added that IFAD's extensive experience in community-driven development and participation – including with farmers' organizations – was an important starting point. In addition, in the case of Mali, many of the activities would be implemented through private sector and community-based organizations. The selection of these would follow proper due diligence processes. In the case of Ethiopia, Management explained that the project would adopt a carefully phased approach in the high-risk areas to ensure that only activities for which there was a conducive environment went ahead.
9. Finally, Member States voiced concern about the fiscal space of Madagascar for borrowing from IFAD. The Minister for Agriculture and Livestock of Madagascar, who was present to support the PROGRESS project, responded that the Ministry has had several discussions with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, who confirmed their commitment towards this programme, while considering their debt absorption capacity. Management also informed Member States that IFAD regularly reviewed the debt sustainability of its borrowing members to determine the borrowing capacity and terms.

II. Summary of proposals and discussions

A. Asia and the Pacific Region

Indonesia: Country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) (EB 2022/137/R.20)

10. The COSOP for Indonesia covers the period 2023–2027. It builds on the findings of the country programme and strategy evaluation (CSPE) undertaken by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD (IOE) in 2021 and the previous COSOP completion review. It also benefitted from broad consultations with key government counterparts at national, provincial and district levels, bilateral partners, UN agencies, NGOs, the private sector and farmers' organizations. Its key elements are promotion of businesses for poverty reduction; geographic coverage to expand to other regions not benefitting from IFAD engagement to test approaches in different contexts; strengthening of the role of provinces and districts in project implementation; and stronger focus on systematic learning and sharing across the programme. The COSOP's two strategic objectives (SOs) are: small-scale producers increase income from diversified and resilient production; and institutions and organizations, from village to national level strengthen their capacities to respond to small-scale producers' needs.
11. Following the presentation of the COSOP, the Director, IOE, stated that most of the CSPE findings and recommendations had been addressed in the COSOP, particularly regarding the focus on strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems as a priority of the IFAD programme in Indonesia.

12. The COSOP was fully endorsed by Member States. Representatives commended the Asia and the Pacific Division (APR) for the well-prepared COSOP, which is aligned to country policies, incorporates food systems and value chain approaches, and gives prominence to capacity-building and to SSTC. Management was requested to elaborate on the partnerships between smallholder farmers and the private sector proposed in the COSOP. In response, Management explained that these partnerships were intended to create win-win agreements between smallholder farmers and medium-sized enterprises that would strengthen farmers' access to markets and other services.

**Pakistan: Country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP)
(EB 2022/137/R.21)**

13. The Pakistan country programme is IFAD's largest portfolio, with approved IFAD financing of US\$451 million across five ongoing projects, directly benefitting more than 1.5 million households (or 10 million people). Rural poverty is among the country's key challenges – nearly 63 per cent of the population live in rural areas and account for 80 per cent of the country's poor. The Government's priorities include economic turnaround, agricultural transformation, poverty reduction, energy security, women and youth empowerment and climate resilience building. The COSOP covers the period 2023–2027 and builds on IFAD's strong experience and lessons learned on the ground. The strategic objectives are aligned with the ongoing portfolio and the Government's strategies and vision. The CSPE covering the period 2000 to 2020 provided valuable lessons for the COSOP's formulation. The COSOP design had already been completed when the recent floods in Pakistan occurred, but the priorities since identified by the Government in the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment will be carefully considered during COSOP implementation, including different geographic targeting.
14. The COSOP's overall goal is to contribute to inclusive and accelerated rural poverty reduction and enhanced food security in a gender-, youth-, nutrition- and climate-sensitive manner. The strategic objectives are: SO1 – enhancing the productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers through climate-resilient diversification and an agribusiness approach; and SO2 – fostering inclusion of the landless and ultra-poor households through an economic graduation approach.
15. The COSOP for Pakistan was endorsed by Member States, and was commended for its alignment with key government development priorities. IFAD was praised for championing agriculture and poverty alleviation solutions in the country and for its professionalism and impact in the field. Member States also remarked on the positive benefits of the SSTC activities in Pakistan.
16. IOE flagged that the targeting strategy of the COSOP was not aligned with the CSPE's recommendations. Management responded that the proposed targeting strategy would need to continue using the National Poverty Scorecard as this is the only national poverty classification system in place to assess poverty graduation. The Associate Vice-President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, acknowledged the uniqueness of Pakistan's Poverty Scorecard and the importance for IFAD to be aligned with national systems.

Cambodia: Agriculture Services Programme for an Inclusive Rural Economy and Agricultural Trade (EB 2022/137/R.30)

17. The Agriculture Services Programme for an Inclusive Rural Economy and Agricultural Trade (ASPIRE-AT) was designed in response to the Government's request to enhance the Agriculture Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE), reaching completion in December 2022. ASPIRE is considered a flagship project of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. ASPIRE-AT will support the Government's strategy in response to the COVID-19 crisis and the Agricultural Development Policy 2030. The design was conducted jointly with the European Investment Bank and benefitted from extensive

consultation with key government stakeholders, development partners, the private sector, and civil society and farmers' organizations. An additional in-country consultation was conducted with representatives of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, GIZ, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the European Union in Cambodia. The proposed project is endorsed by the Government of Cambodia, the United Nations Country Team, and the Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water. The negotiation of the financing agreement was concluded on 1 December 2022 with the Ministry of Finance.

18. The representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries remarked on the success of the ongoing ASPIRE programme, which was the basis of ASPIRE-AT's design. ASPIRE-AT is fully in line with current national policies. Member States fully supported the programme, in particular its gender transformative aspect. However, they expressed concern over the high level of private debt referred to in a recent International Monetary Fund report and underscored the need for safeguards against over-indebtedness of farmers. Management responded that access to agriculture value chain financing in Cambodia is very challenging. Currently, the most convenient credit line available in the market for smallholders is a personal loan. Household debt crisis is tied to the public health crisis causing health risks and food insecurity. ASPIRE-AT will address this issue through two approaches: mitigation and resilience. On the mitigation side, the banks that finance smallholder farmers and small enterprises will use a credit bureau. In terms of resilience, the project will help farmers and their cooperatives obtain access to fixed-asset financing for their production and post-production investments through loan products that structure a manageable sequence of payments against available cash flows, including any debt. These cash flows are documented in business development plans supported by the project in order to measure the viability of entrepreneurship and analyse the ability to pay. The project also builds smallholder farmers' production capacity to ensure food security and create a surplus for market. These income generation and productivity improvements will offer relief to farmers in debt distress by increasing the supply of disposable income.

B. Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia

Uzbekistan: Country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP) (EB 2022/137/R.22)

19. In Uzbekistan, three rural development programmes amounting to US\$435 million (with US\$129 million of IFAD financing) have been approved by the Executive Board since 2011, making Uzbekistan the Fund's largest country programme in the Europe and Central Asia region. The 2023–2027 COSOP outlines a programme of work exceeding US\$600 million, including both IFAD resources and cofinancing, over the IFAD12 and IFAD13 periods. It targets 205,000 households, representing 1,200,000 rural people, small-scale producers, women and youth.
20. Building on IFAD's pioneering role in investing in agricultural diversification in Uzbekistan, the COSOP's overarching goal is to sustainably increase rural prosperity and improve the livelihoods of small-scale producers. The strategic objectives are: SO1 – increased resilience and productivity of small-scale producers; SO2 – improved access for small-scale producers to viable food systems and agricultural markets; and SO3 – enhanced enabling environment for inclusive rural transformation. Management highlighted the COSOP's ambition to deploy the full breadth of IFAD's enhanced business model across the lending programme, private sector engagement and climate finance. New ways of working were presented for the delivery of a transformative country programme, namely a programmatic approach, an integrated management unit and the establishment of IFAD's first office in Central Asia, which will allow for effective policy engagement, partnership-building and greater visibility. The COSOP builds on the lessons learned from a

decade of project implementation experience, proactive portfolio management that successfully addressed the 2021 country programme audit and the CSPE recommendations.

21. Management highlighted the COSOP's focus on scaling up innovation, strengthening resilience to climate change and closing the inclusion gap with rural entrepreneurship, which is even more critical in the context of compounding crises. The Government's ownership of the strategy as well as its broad validation by public institutions, development partners, the private sector, civil society, representatives of farmers' and women's group were also noted.
22. The Government expressed its gratitude to IFAD for the consistent and constructive cooperation towards the 2030 Agenda and for IFAD's backing in implementing the recent reforms embraced by the country aimed at reducing poverty through investments in agriculture and food system transformation. The increasing relevance and strength of the partnership with IFAD was also noted, including the recent signature of the host country agreement.
23. Member States commended the relevance and quality of the COSOP and its areas of focus, reflecting the consultative, evidence-based and participatory formulation process.

C. West and Central Africa

Cameroon: Aquaculture Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EB 2022/137/R.35)

24. Although the agriculture sector is an engine of economic growth in Cameroon, the aquaculture sector has yet to be expanded. The Aquaculture Entrepreneurship Development Programme (PDEA) is aimed at filling this gap. Its main development objective is to improve the incomes, employment, food and nutritional security and climate resilience of the rural poor, in particular women and young people, by developing aquaculture entrepreneurship in the five regions of intervention (Far North, West, Centre, South, Littoral). It targets 23,000 households, mostly economically and socially vulnerable entrepreneurs and family aquaculturists, in particular women, young people, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples. Forty per cent of the targeted beneficiaries are women, and 50 per cent are young people. This project builds on the findings and lessons learned from the IFAD-funded Aquaculture Entrepreneurship Promotion Project (2016–2019), which succeeded in doubling aquaculture production in the targeted communities and developed a portfolio of over 300 aquaculture entrepreneurs.
25. The project has three components: (i) improving the productivity and resilience of aquaculture systems; (ii) the development of the aquaculture value chain; and (iii) policy dialogue and programme coordination. The expected outcomes are: (i) increase in the productivity and climate resilience of aquaculture production, processing and marketing systems, (ii) increase the added value generated by aquaculture; (iii) improve the policy environment and the framework for the regulation and inclusive promotion of the aquaculture subsector. The total project cost is US\$61.6 million and IFAD's contribution amounts to US\$47.0 million (76.3 per cent of total costs). Member States appreciated the project design and sought no further clarifications.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: Empowerment through Nutrition-Sensitive, Inclusive and Resilient Agricultural and Rural Entrepreneurship (AVENIR) (EB 2022/137/R.36)

26. The Empowerment through Nutrition-Sensitive, Inclusive and Resilient Agricultural and Rural Entrepreneurship (AVENIR) project aims to support sustainable transformation of family farming and better management of natural resources in order to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and to income improvement and food diversity of rural households in the provinces of Central

Kongo, Kwango, Kwilu and Maï-Ndombé and in the agricultural outskirts of Kinshasa. The project targets 450,000 households (about 2 million people), of whom at least 50 per cent are women, 50 per cent are youth, 5 per cent are persons with disabilities and 0.5 per cent are indigenous.

27. In the context of the country's food and nutritional insecurity, the project will help to meet the high demand for food in urban markets and reduce the dependence on food imports. It has three components: (i) family farming, and sustainable agricultural and rural entrepreneurship; (ii) improving access and regional markets; and (iii) project coordination and management, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management. The project is nutrition-sensitive and youth-sensitive and builds on positive lessons learned from other IFAD operations in West and Central Africa, such as the incubation approach adopted in the Programme for the Promotion of Youth Agropastoral Entrepreneurship in Cameroon, the shared-cost financing system tested in The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo, and the integrated territorial approach applied in Niger.
28. The total cost is US\$213.5 million over a seven-year period. It will be financed as follows: US\$45.2 million from IFAD; EUR 50 million from Agence Française de Développement; US\$19.0 million from the Government; US\$31.9 million in loans from partner financial institutions; US\$6.9 million in in-kind contributions from beneficiaries; and US\$40.0 million in the form of a grant from the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI). There is a financing gap of US\$17.1 million.
29. Member States commended the design of the project and sought no further clarification.

Mali: Second Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project – FIER 2 (EB 2022/137/R.37)

30. FIER 2 is designed to consolidate and expand on the achievements of the first phase by supporting the economic inclusion of rural youth in high-potential value chains, while improving the effectiveness and efficiency of support services. The entrepreneurial potential of young women, which remains largely untapped, will be also promoted. The project will contribute to wealth creation and poverty reduction among rural youth. Building on the lessons learned from the first phase, FIER 2 will adopt a market-driven approach to vocational training and job creation by improving stakeholders' institutional capacities upstream and downstream in agricultural and non-agricultural value chains. The development objective of the project is to promote entrepreneurship in rural areas and facilitate the economic integration of young people in agricultural value chains and non-agricultural subsectors. An estimated 60,000 rural youth aged between 15 and 40 years will benefit from vocational training and/or economic integration through self-employment (entrepreneurship) or salaried employment, and 9 000 rural youth will be linked to supply chains with well-established input and output markets. Approximately 40 per cent of the beneficiaries will be young women.
31. The project has two main components: (i) improving the enabling institutional and socio-economic environment for the promotion of rural youth entrepreneurship and employment; and (ii) supporting rural youth in generating decent incomes through sustainable access to financial and non-financial services adapted to their aspirations and market requirements. The project addresses two mainstreaming themes and includes a focus on young persons with disabilities and the job creation for rural youth. The total project cost is EUR 99.1 million; IFAD will provide financing of EUR 38.7 million.
32. Member States expressed support for the project. Additional information was requested on: (i) the capacity of the project to provide access to financial and non-financial services to youth, and whether this would be through state-run financing organizations or private institutions; (ii) how IFAD has addressed project risks and how financial management risks will be mitigated; (iii) project areas, and the

potential to expand in areas with security challenges; and (iv) implementation methodology. Management clarified that both financial and non-financial services would be fully supported by the private sector, with no public sector involvement. The financial service providers are microfinance institutions recruited through a competitive process, with due diligence undertaken for strategic partners, such as farmers' organizations. The non-financial services will be sourced from a range of providers. Regarding financial risks, Management explained that project funds will be managed by a ring-fenced unit with financial and decision-making autonomy, and that the bulk of activities will be implemented by non-government entities, mostly service providers. On the issue of extending project activities into the non-secure areas of the central and northern parts of the country, Management explained that this would happen only if stringent security criteria were met, but that it was important to keep this possibility open, given the volatility of the current security situation and the widespread rural poverty in these currently unreachable parts of Mali.

D. East and Southern Africa

Ethiopia: Participatory Agriculture and Climate Transformation Programme (EB 2022/137/R.31)

33. The programme has a total cost of US\$179 million and is financed through an IFAD grant of US\$78.2 million, an enhanced Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme [ASAP+] grant of US\$10.5 million; grant from the European Commission of US\$16.86 million, a Gender Transformative Mechanism grant of US\$5 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; a loan of US\$35.013 million from the Green Climate Fund; a government contribution of US\$24 million; and US\$3.7 million and US\$4.4 million from private sector and beneficiaries respectively. Its development objective is to enable vulnerable rural households (men, women, youth and persons with disabilities) in selected kebeles to sustainably improve incomes, food and nutrition security and build resilience to climate shocks. The Participatory Agriculture and Climate Transformation (PACT) programme will benefit some 150,000 households, with the targeted participation of women (50 per cent), youth (40 per cent) and persons with disabilities (5 per cent).
34. PACT will be implemented over seven years, in six regions and 90 food-insecure *woredas*, ensuring no overlap with flagship projects financed by other donors and the Government. The programme has three components: (i) community-led climate-smart productive landscapes; (ii) agribusiness development; and (iii) institutional and policy strengthening and implementation support services. PACT addresses four mainstreaming priorities and is gender-transformational, nutrition-sensitive, climate-focused and youth-sensitive.
35. The State Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture highlighted the importance of the programme for poverty alleviation in food-insecure districts of Ethiopia. He highlighted the lead role played by the Government and other stakeholders in the programme's formulation, emphasizing the need for more funding in order to include other regions, such as Tigray. The programme is fully in line with the Government's strategies and policies.
36. Member States sought clarification on: (i) use of FAO's agroecology approach; (ii) the market facilitation activities; (iii) synergies with other ongoing programmes and partnerships; and (iv) rationale for selection of targeted areas, and reasons for not including Tigray and Benshangul-Gumuz. Management responded that the programme will ensure that its regenerative approaches are aligned with FAO's agroecology approach. On the market facilitation activities, Management explained that, at the request of the Government, the programme will focus on improving food production in food-insecure districts. Some limited resources have been earmarked for market facilitation. The entry point for market facilitation will be

cooperatives. With regard to synergies and partnerships, it was explained that the programme will complement ongoing programmes of donors, while avoiding overlap with flagship programmes. Finally, on the issue of targeted regions, Management clarified that at the concept note stage, with potential funding of about US\$300 million, eight regional states had been targeted, including Tigray. Following the reduction of the funding envelope to US\$179 million, the Government agreed to reduce the geographic area to Somali, Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Sidama and South West Ethiopia. Other regions will be included subject to (a) additional funding secured; and (b) security of staff and project implementers.

Madagascar: Programme for Strengthening Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Economic Integration of Rural Youth (EB 2022/137/R.33)

37. The Programme for Strengthening Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Economic Integration of Rural Youth Programme (PROGRESS) aims to address the high levels of poverty, hunger hotspots, and youth unemployment in Madagascar. The programme goal is to contribute to poverty reduction and the creation of employment opportunities in rural communities. Its development objective is to promote inclusive and sustainable entrepreneurship, prioritizing youth, especially through the development of climate-resilient value chains. The Programme for Strengthening Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Economic Integration of Rural Youth (PROGRES) will cover 12 regions across three provinces of Madagascar: six with particularly high exposure to food insecurity in the southern belt; three in the West, and three regions in the central highlands. IFAD-funded projects are already operating in these regions.
38. PROGRES is expected to reach 130,000 poor rural households or approximately 650,000 people of whom at least 40 per cent will be women with adequate representation in decision-making committees across all project components. Out of the total beneficiaries, 60 per cent will be youth (18 to 30 years) with equal representation of women and men. Persons with disabilities will account for approximately 0.75 per cent of the beneficiaries. Strategies have been included to reach out to youth, women and persons with disabilities.
39. The presentation of PROGRESS was followed by an intervention by the Minister for Agriculture, who requested that Madagascar's allocation under the performance-based allocation system for IFAD12 be used to continue supporting rural entrepreneurship and youth employment; promote cash crops and rice production, and strengthen the capacities of local institutions and producers' organizations under PROGRESS.
40. The programme was fully endorsed by Member States. A query was raised about the debt sustainability of Madagascar. The Minister of Agriculture responded that discussions had been undertaken with the Ministry of Economy and Finance to ensure commitment to the programme and debt absorption capacity.

Zimbabwe: Horticulture Enterprise Enhancement Project (EB 2022/137/R.34)

41. The Horticulture Enterprise Enhancement Project (HEEP), financed jointly with the OPEC Fund for International Development, has as its main development objective to support and increase and sustainable horticultural production and sales by smallholder farmers and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises engaged in horticulture value chains. It will reach 71,000 households, mostly poor smallholder farmers; especially women, youth and persons with disabilities. Fifty per cent of the target beneficiaries are women, 30 per cent are youth. The project will target 2,000 persons with disabilities.
42. The project components are: (i) village horticulture garden and 4P development (public-private-producer partnerships); (ii) access to finance; and (iii) institutional support and project coordination. The total project cost is US\$66.5 million, with IFAD financing of US\$37.14 million. Key cofinanciers will be private financial

institutions and the Horticulture Development Council, with US\$5 million and US\$0.06 million respectively. The project will also receive financing of US\$3.1 million from anchor firms. It addresses three mainstreaming priorities: gender, nutrition and climate. The project shares a management unit with the ongoing IFAD-funded projects: the Smallholder Irrigation Management Programme (SIRP) and the Smallholder Agriculture Cluster Project (SACP).

43. The presentation was followed by an intervention from the Chief Director, Ministry of Agriculture, who highlighted the active involvement of the Government of Zimbabwe in the project design and the project's full alignment with the Government's strategies and policies.
44. Member States requested clarification on the role of the private and public sectors in implementation. Management explained that HEEP builds on the 4P approach. It will work with government ministries and parastatals, as is the case with the ongoing projects. The public sector agencies include: (a) the Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA), which is responsible for managing irrigation schemes and village horticulture gardens and providing aggregation facilities for farmers; (b) AGRITEX for climate-resilient crop/variety selection and training farmers on good agronomic practices and environment/natural resource management; and (c) the Agricultural Marketing Authority will ensure market linkages and registration of farmers and value chain actors. Management further clarified that the private sector will play an important role and will consist of anchor firms, financial institutions, contractors for construction of civil works and entities providing capacity-building in business development services, good agricultural practices/climate-smart agriculture, financial products, nutrition and the Gender Action Learning System. The anchor firms will be critical in providing market support and extension services for the agricultural producer groups. Member States indicated that they will provide further written comments.