Investing in rural people

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President's report on a proposed grant under the private sector window to Ernst and Young, Nigeria for the Enabling Private Sector Investment and Access to Services for Smallholder Farmers through Digital Farmer Registry (Open Agri Connect) project

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation contained in paragraph 16.

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President's report on a proposed grant under the private sector window to Ernst and Young, Nigeria for the Enabling Private Sector Investment and Access to Services for Smallholder Farmers through Digital Farmer Registry (Open Agri Connect) project

I. Background and compliance with the IFAD Regular Grants Policy

1. Agriculture plays a vital role in the economies of both Nigeria and Rwanda, employs a significant portion of the workforce (70 per cent in Nigeria and 65 per cent in Rwanda) and contributes an average of 25 per cent of the GDP of the two countries. However, farmers continue to face persistent challenges and inefficiencies, including limited access to information and markets, inadequate credit and insufficient availability of high-quality inputs. Nigeria and Rwanda are committed to leveraging digital technologies to overcome these challenges to increase market access, boost productivity and improve food security. Globally, there is a growing movement to scale the impact of digitally enabled services through the development of digital public infrastructure (DPI).

2. The Open Agri Connect (OAC) project is aimed at establishing scalable digital farmer registries using the DPI approach in Nigeria and Rwanda to address the gaps in reliable agricultural data, which will help improve the delivery of digital and allied services, increase private sector investment and enrich policy-making. The project aligns with IFAD's Strategic Framework (2016–2025), which promotes inclusive and sustainable rural transformation and supports the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources (IFAD13) priorities that emphasize private sector engagement and collaboration. It also aligns with the Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) Strategy (2020–2030), which advocates for promoting the scaling of services to smallholder farmers by enabling digital transformation in agriculture.

3. OAC plays a critical role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by integrating accurate agricultural data into national and regional planning. It supports SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 2 (zero hunger) by facilitating targeted interventions and improving market access and resource allocation to boost smallholder livelihoods and food security. It also advances SDG 5 (gender equality) by promoting equal access by women to agricultural services and digital tools. Through better market connectivity and access to service providers, the platform contributes to SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) by enabling value addition and job creation in agriculture. Finally, it supports SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 15 (life on land) by facilitating climate-resilient practices and sustainable land management through better data on land and crop patterns.

4. The proposed project aligns with the goals and objectives of the IFAD Regular Grants Policy (2021)[1] and supports strategic objective 2: foster a more conducive policy and investment environment for smallholder agriculture and rural development, including at the regional and global level. By lowering the cost of customer acquisition for the private sector and reducing uncertainty caused by the lack of reliable data, the grant aims to create a more supportive policy and investment environment for smallholder agriculture and rural development at both the regional and global levels. It also promotes cost-effective delivery of digital services at scale.

5. Regular grant financing gives IFAD an opportunity to support high-impact initiatives that fall outside of traditional loan financing. This grant will enable the Fund to

[1] EB 2021/132/R.3.

expand its engagement with the private sector by supporting innovative non-lending activities aligned with national policies – specifically, with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS) in Nigeria and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) in Rwanda. It offers a valuable platform for IFAD to build operational capacity around DPI, gain practical experience and collaborate with organizations implementing similar initiatives. These efforts are expected to feed into future loan-supported projects.

6. The recipient was identified through competitive selection (see appendix III).

II. The proposed project

7. The **overall goal** of the project is to accelerate the transition to data-driven commercially oriented agriculture in Nigeria and Rwanda. The **project development objective** is to stimulate network effects and increase smallholder farmers' access to digital services, improving agricultural productivity and decision-making while promoting enabling policies for data-driven innovation through scalable digital farmer registries. OAC will support the development of digital farmer registries, facilitating greater access to services for smallholder farmers through government and the private sector and promoting data-driven decision-making in alignment with digital agriculture strategies in the target countries. Specifically, the grant will support the delivery of the following activities: (i) component 1 – design and pilot the implementation of digital farmer registry; and (ii) component 2 – build capacity and strengthen data governance and knowledge to operationalize the registries.

8. **Target groups.** OAC will create digital registry structures for Nigeria and Rwanda to reach approximately **500,000 farmers in selected states/provinces** in each country. The specific states/provinces and their subordinate administrative divisions for implementation will be determined in collaboration with MINAGRI, FMAFS and IFAD, as well as the respective national and state government authorities. In addition, OAC will support the implementation of two unique use cases (i.e. farmer-centric services such as loans, insurance, advice, input access, market access) or government input arrangements. **Selection of the pilot state/province is based on indicative criteria, such as:** (i) administrative readiness and willingness; (ii) the availability of a decent farmer dataset; (iii) the availability of comprehensive farm data, including maps and ownership details; (iv) political stability/security; (v) its significance for demonstration purposes without excessive risk; and (vi) the accessibility of field-level extension services and project staff.

9. As the digital farmer registries underlie the DPI, the target group will include all agricultural households in the identified pilot locations. The use cases to be prioritized during the pilot phase are existing digital services/tools, which will use the data from the digital farmer registries. The use cases focus on providing inclusive services, ensuring that smallholder farmers, especially women and marginalized communities, are equipped with digital tools for market access, finance and knowledge sharing.

10. The project will be implemented over two years and will have the **following components: (i) component 1 – design and pilot implementation of digital farmer registry.** The grant will support design and implementation of digital farmer registry based on key features and DPI principles. This will include a comprehensive needs assessment involving key public and private stakeholders in Nigeria and Rwanda. It will build on existing digital initiatives, such as Rwanda’s Smart Nkunganire System and Nigeria’s Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones, to create a robust and scalable digital farmer registry. Through stakeholder consultations, the project will define system requirements, assess current data sources and prepare a detailed project plan and inception report. Subsequently, the design will include: (i) the definition of standard data fields; (ii) the development of secure and interoperable technology infrastructure; and (iii) the forging of strategic

partnerships to drive use cases such as transaction digitalization, financing access and service delivery. The project will build core digital components, including a unified farmer service interface, consent manager and agri-data sharing, using open-source technologies and modular architecture. These will ensure data quality, privacy compliance and interoperability; **(ii) component 2 – build capacity and strengthen data governance and knowledge**. To support effective data collection and use, the project will engage in extensive capacity-building for local teams, focusing on the use of digital tools, data collection processes and adherence to national data governance frameworks. These efforts are designed to simplify data access and collection while ensuring that teams are equipped to manage data responsibly. Robust data governance procedures will be established to support secure, consent-based data sharing among key stakeholders, including government agencies, financial institutions and private service providers, and to facilitate seamless data integration among stakeholders. Technical assistance will be provided to develop and adopt regulatory frameworks and data policies, ensuring privacy compliance and interoperability across platforms. National-level consultations with ministries and implementing partners will inform these frameworks, facilitating broader policy engagement. As the project progresses, lessons learned from pilot implementations will be documented and disseminated, including through collaboration with development partners such as the United Nations system.

III. Expected outcomes/outputs

11. The project is expected to have two main outcomes: (i) smallholder farmer productivity and market participation are boosted by improved access to digital identities and services; (ii) data-driven agriculture fuels sustainable growth, financial inclusion and rural prosperity. These are linked to two key outputs: (i) a fully functional digital farmer registry piloted in Nigeria and Rwanda, with standardized data governance protocols for registration and data sharing established, thereby enabling key use cases for digital farmer registry and partnerships with private and public sector entities to enable use cases; (ii) capacity-building and robust data governance mechanisms implemented. OAC is expected to register 500,000 farmers in both countries and establish at least two use cases (public or private services), building on the farmer registry data supporting the delivery of services to 100,000 smallholder farmers.

IV. Implementation arrangements

12. Ernst and Young (EY), Nigeria was chosen as the implementing partner for the OAC grant through competitive selection. Grant implementation will be led by teams from EY Nigeria with technical support from EY India and EY Rwanda. The teams will engage with national stakeholders, including the ministries of agriculture, information and communication technologies and others identified during needs assessment in the respective countries. The respective ministries from the two countries have nominated – through their endorsement – key focal points for effective coordination. EY will also coordinate in the needs assessment and design stage with IFAD country teams in Nigeria and Rwanda and coordinate and report to the IFAD grant manager (IFAD ICT4D team).

13. The grant represents IFAD's support for the development of farmer registries, aiming to complement government initiatives to advance digital services for smallholder farmers. In Rwanda, MINAGRI's digital unit will collaborate with EY to facilitate the grant's implementation in alignment with roll-out of the broader agriculture management information system, while at the same time coordinating with the single project implementation unit to leverage synergies with the Rwanda Dairy Development Project – Phase 2. In Nigeria, EY will partner with the Directorate of Planning under FMAFS to coordinate efforts with the Value Chain North Nigeria project and engage with both the National Information Technology

Development Agency and the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Agribusiness and Productivity Enhancement.

14. There are no deviations from the standard financial reporting and audit procedures.

V. Indicative project costs and financing

15. The IFAD grant provides up to US$1.5 million for direct coverage of grant implementation. EY directly contributes the additional US$0.5million through the additional involvement of senior and subject matter resources, as required and agreed with IFAD in the grant agreement. EY has also approached other donors and foundations for cofinancing, which at this stage has yet to be finalized.

Table 1
Costs by component and financier
(United States dollars)

Components	*IFAD*	*EY in kind*	*Total*
Component 1	1 162 490	387 497	1 506 535
Component 2	337 510	112 503	450 004
Total	**1 500 000**	**500 000**	**2 000 000**

Table 2
Costs by expenditure category and financier
(United States dollars)

*Expenditure category**	*IFAD*	*EY in kind*	*Total*
Salaries and allowances	436 207	145 402	581 609
Consultancies	717 891	239 297	957 188
Workshops	59 330	19 777	79 106
Travel and **allowances**	120 677	40 226	160 902
Capacity-building/training	50 269	16 756	67 025
Project management	115 628	38 543	154 170
Total	**1 500 000**	**500 000**	**2 000 000**

* Please note that 77 per cent of the costs are related to salaries and consultancies, since the nature of the grant is to build the digital farmer registries and heavily relies on technical assistance to build the system architecture, system design and processes and capacity and data governance mechanisms. Given the nature of the grant and the budget category descriptions, these activities need to be budgeted as salaries and consultancies.

VI. Recommendation

16. I recommend that the Executive Board approve the proposed grant in terms of the following resolution:

> RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to finance, in part, the Open Agri Connect project, shall provide a grant in an amount of one million five hundred thousand United States dollars (US$1,500,000) to Ernst and Young, Nigeria for two years and upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented to the Executive Board herein.

Alvaro Lario
President

Results-based logical framework

Results hierarchy	Indicators			Means of verification			Assumptions
	Name	Baseline	End target	Source	Freq.	Respons.	
Outreach	Farmers registered in selected provinces /states in Rwanda and Nigeria by year 2		1,000, 000[2].	Project monitoring reports			Political and social stability in both countries. Government support and collaboration
Goal: Accelerated transition to data-driven commercially oriented agriculture in Rwanda. Promoting inclusive and sustainable rural development through digital services, supporting climate-resilient agriculture, and achieving SDGs (1,2,5,8,13, and 15) by integrating digital solutions into agriculture and rural development	Increase in farmer income by year 2		15%	Agricultural productivity surveys Farmer income assessments			Political and social stability in both countries Government support and collaboration
Development objective: Stimulate network effects and enhance smallholder farmers' access to digital services, improving agricultural productivity and decision-making while promoting enabling policies for data-driven innovation through scalable digital farmer registries	Functional digital farmer registry deployed. Number of use cases enabled. Number of services (e.g., loans, inputs) accessed via the registry		Registry fully operational by end of year 1 At least two key use cases each in Rwanda and Nigeria by the end of year 2 At least 5 services accessible via the registry by year 2	Technical implementation reports Service usage statistics from registry			Farmers adopt the registry and use digital services. Continued private sector interest

[2] The targets will be 500,000 farmers in each country. The farmer registration and use-case utilization by the farmers assume that the project will leverage existing digital farmer registry portals and crowdsource like the Smart Nkunganire System (SNS) from Rwanda and the SAPZ from Nigeria and other IFAD-funded projects/initiatives run in Rwanda and Nigeria. We plan to migrate existing farmer data from these and other private portals, which will eliminate the need for new data collection. Additionally, we assume that the integration of these systems will enhance farmer engagement with the registry, increasing the adoption and practical use of available digital services.

Results hierarchy	Indicators			Means of verification			Assumptions
	Name	Baseline	End target	Source	Freq.	Respons.	
Outcome 1 Component 1 Smallholder farmer productivity and market participation are boosted by improved access to digital identities and services. **Outcome 2 Component 1** Data-driven private sector innovation and investment in agriculture are enabled by farmer registry and digital database	Number of farmers accessing improved services through digital farmer registries		100 000 farmers use the digital platforms for the two developed key use cases.				Stable internet and digital infrastructure. Private sector willingness to collaborate.
Outputs Component 1 Fully functional digital farmer registry piloted in Rwanda and Nigeria, with standardized data governance protocols for registration and data sharing established thereby enabling key use cases for DFR, and partnerships with private and public sector entities to enable use cases	Number of farmers registered. Number of private and public sector entities partnerships established		1,000, 000 farmers registered in two years(500K in each country). At least three partnerships with financial institutions and input providers by year 2	Registry system logs Partnership agreements			
Outcome 1 Component 2 Data-driven agriculture fuels sustainable growth, financial inclusion and rural prosperity	Trained local experts equipped to manage and maintain digital infrastructure for sustainable registry operations			Satisfaction survey			Local teams adopt the governance framework. Sufficient legal and regulatory support
Outputs Component 2 Capacity building and robust data governance mechanisms implemented	Number of local teams trained on data governance. Data governance framework established		100 Frameworks established in both countries	Training reports. Data governance framework document.			

Financial governance

I. Introduction

Given the selection of Ernst and Young a private sector entity as the recipient (see appendix III for details), the strictest financial management and governance frameworks will be established to ensure efficient use of IFAD resources to achieve programme objectives. These will ensure that IFAD resources are being used most efficiently to achieve the objectives of the programme.

This appendix includes details on a. financial management overview, b. financial management systems, and c. audit arrangements.

II. Financial management system (including accounting specifications)

A. Objectives

Ernst & Young Nigeria (EY) as recipient of the grant will also internally manage the financial management component of the Open Agri Connect Grant, ensuring full compliance with IFAD's financial standards and fiduciary requirements. EY will adapt and strengthen financial systems to support the transparent, accountable, and efficient use of grant resources. A key focus will be on enhancing **accountability and transparency** through digitised financial reporting tools and required audit reports and continuous assurance on the proper use of funds.

To this end, the recipient financial management framework will be used to report on the implementation of the grant, while meeting IFAD's rigorous financial standards. This framework will include clear detailed budget, Statement of expenditure, and financial reporting. EY has rigorous internal controls that prioritise risk mitigation ensuring integrity at every stage of fund utilisation. Through this approach, EY will provide the financial stewardship necessary to safeguard resources, meet IFAD's fiduciary obligations, and support the successful implementation of the Open Agri Connect grant.

Type of accounting standards used	International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)
Software/systems for accounting & financial management (are financial activities tracked under a specific code or account?)	SAP (Mercury) Accounting Software. Each engagement is set up with a unique engagement code and all activities related to the engagement are posted to the code
Bank account setup (dedicated account? currency?)	a bank account shall be set aside for this purpose
Fund withdrawal & disbursement procedures (e.g., via Withdrawal Applications)	the firm's account payable procedures and controls will be applied in all disbursements and withdrawals. All transactions are processed on the SAP (Mercury) accounting software
Description of internal control roles (Who is responsible for oversight?)	the firm's role in internal control involves the process of assessing new project opportunities and the clients involved to ensure that the risks associated with the delivery of such projects and working with the clients involved are at acceptable levels. Such assessments involve

	understanding the sector in which the client belongs, the compliance level of the client with the local regulatory authorities, the level of political exposures of key personnel of the client and the type of project to be delivered for the client. All of these and other factors add up to determine EY's position to engaging with clients
Compliance and ethics frameworks (e.g., Codes of Conduct, ISO certifications)	the recipient's Code of Conduct (the "Code") provides an ethical framework for our behavior. It draws on E&Y shared values and builds on its purpose and our ambition. The code of conduct is organized into five categories containing guiding principles that is used by everyone within EY to guide behaviour across all areas. These include: • Working with one another • Working with clients and others • Acting with professional integrity • Maintaining our objectivity and independence; and lastly • Protecting data, information and intellectual capital

III. Procurement procedures

A. Objectives

The EY Global Policy on procurement for Africa region member firms aligns with IFAD General Provisions and Procurement Policy, ensuring compliance throughout grant implementation. Internal policies and manuals guide adherence to IFAD requirements, while the BRIDGE tool supports competitive selection and transparency. EY ensures two to three vendors for each service are onboarded to compare prices and select the most suitable provider.

Procedures for hiring and operational procurement: EY follows a process of vendor by undertaking a due diligence process to ensure that the vendor follows ethical procurement practices. The entire due diligence process is undertaken by the Procurement, Risk and Legal teams to ensure that each aspect of the vendor meets the required standard.

IV. Audit arrangements

A. Objectives

-The recipient will conduct external audit coverage that complies with IFAD requirements

As per section 3.8 of the General Provisions the Recipient is required to submit to IFAD its annual audited institutional financial statements, audit opinion on the Statement of Expenditures, and its management letter by no later than 6 months of the Recipient's fiscal year end.

Selection process and rationale for selection of private sector recipient

I. Introduction

1. The recipient, Ernst and Young, Nigeria was selected as recipient of the Grant – Agri Connect: Enabling private sector investment and access to services for smallholder farmers through digital farmer registry" (AgriConnect) through a competitive selection process.

II. Competitive selection process overview

2. Once AgriConnect was approved for IFAD grant financing, a call for proposals was advertised on IFAD's website on 8 July 2024 with deadline for submissions on 16 August 2024 17:00 CET. IFAD received 66 proposals in total within the stated timeline through a dedicated email Id which was clearly stated in the call for proposals. Proposals submitted after the deadline were automatically disqualified and not considered for selection. An auto reject email was setup for proposals received after the advertised deadline. A dedicated team's folder was then created with all documents received, consolidated in one place with access provided to all competitive evaluation committee (CEC) members. The grant managers organised a consultative meeting with the CEC to agree on pre-screening criteria to cut down the list of proposals for final review. The consultative meeting was held on 20 August 2024. In line with the criteria published in the open call, the committee agreed to the following for pre-screening the proposals:

   - the organization must have submitted all the requested documents as per the call for proposal advertisement.
   - the proposal was submitted for implementation in both Rwanda and Nigeria as these are the two target countries for the grant, as specified in the call for proposals.

3. From the pre-screening, a short list of 18 proposals was defined. In the final stage, seven proposals were selected for a final evaluation review and discussion. The shortlist included several consortia of non-profit, universities, private sector as well as standalone consulting and technology companies. The evaluation committee members individually and privately evaluated the 18 proposals during the period 20-30 August 2024 based on the pre-defined and advertised (in the call for proposals) technical and financial evaluation criteria.

4. The CEC meeting to consolidate and review the individual evaluations of the proposals was conducted on 30 August 2024 with all but one member present. The absent member submitted the scoring prior to the evaluation committee meeting on the dedicated Microsoft team's folder for this evaluation.

5. Based on the consolidated scoring of the 18 proposals, the top seven proposals were selected for further discussion and final evaluation during the CEC. The top seven proposals included: 1) Ernst and Young (Private sector); 2) International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), a CGIAR centre in consortium with Identi, a non-profit organization; 3) Microsave, private sector with Beehyv software solutions, private sector; 4) Workshop Ventures, Private sector; 5) African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) Africa, a non-profit with Michigan State University; 6) Sathguru Management Consulting, private sector with Rural Development Institute, a non-profit and Dataphyte, a private sector research firm 7) Digital Frontiers with Ooru, IT solutions company Genesis Analytics, an impact firm Digital Information Solutions, a technology firm and OpenG2P a not for profit project of International Institute of Information technology (IIIT), Bangalore, India. The evaluation committee started with a tour de table to give general impressions and observations on the proposals received and agreed to review the top seven

and adopt an elimination approach to reach a consensus on the top three. Following the discussion, the CEC members then reached consensus on the ranking of the top three entities, agreeing that the Ernst and Young's proposal was the best and ranked first. The CEC thus agreed to recommend selection of Ernst and Young as the grant recipient.

III. Selection committee composition

6. The selection committee included representation from the two regions (ESA and WCA) where the grant would be implemented as well as another member from the technical division (ICT). The grant manager (Brenda Gunde) and two other members of the ICT4D team also participated in the technical discussions. Athur Mabiso, Regional Economist for WCA was the Chair of the selection committee.

Table 1: Selection committee composition

Name	Division/Region	Role
Athur Mabiso	WCA	Chair of the evaluation committee
Moses Abukari	ESA	Member
Brenda Gunde	PMI	Member
Sunil Abishaikh	ICT	Member
Esha Singh	PMI	Member
John Ikandi	PMI	Member

IV. Eligibility and evaluation criteria

7. The minimum eligibility requirements were:

For the pre-screening process:

a. Submitting all the requested documents in the call for proposals and follow the templates shared: detailed budget, self-certification of eligibility for IFAD grant financing and brief institutional profile detailing experience related to the grant's theme.
b. Submitting a proposal for implementation both in Rwanda and Nigeria

For the final evaluation:

Table 2: Final evaluation criteria and scoring

Background and technical experience	Staff allocation and expertise	Quality and coherence of proposal	Financial evaluation	Total
30%	30%	20%	20%	100%

a. Background and technical experience – 30 per cent:
    - Demonstrated experience designing and deploying large scale public digital databases and complex infrastructure systems projects.
    - Experience in deployment, management of integrated systems with unified databases, application programming interfaces, user interfaces, data exchanges and legacy systems
    - Evidence of application of Data Governance and Cybersecurity, consent frameworks: Strong knowledge and experience in implementing robust cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive data
    - Proven track record of developing scalable systems with increasing demand and data volume.
    - Experience of working with government institutions globally

- Demonstrated experience of self or partners in training and capacity building, knowledge related activities.
- Demonstrated experience working with international donors and UN agencies.

b. Staff allocation and expertise – 30 per cent
   - Understanding of agricultural policies, processes, solutions targeting farmer needs, and the agricultural value chains
   - Team leader experience in rural development: 5-8 years' experience working on large-scale projects that impact rural communities.
   - 5-8 years combined experience in data management (including collection and processing, analytics), with a focus on handling large datasets.
   - UI/UX designers 5. ICT4D experience

c. Quality and coherence of proposal (sub-criteria) – 20 per cent
   - Relevance of the proposal (i.e. extent to which it meets Agriconnect requirements), including logic and clarity.
   - Strength and feasibility of the proposed approach for the implementation and deployment within the timeframe available
   - Strength and feasibility of the proposed approach for the delivery of activities, including speed of execution, cost efficiency etc.
   - Strength and feasibility of the proposed management structure and approach for the coordination of Agriconnect activities
   - Innovativeness of activities and approach proposed.
   - Quality of plan of activities of capacity building and KM proposed

d. Financial evaluation
   - Proposed cost structure for management of activities
   - Level and nature of cofinancing proposed.

8. The CEC members voted, and the average scores were added to select the top three proposals.

V. Rationale for final selection

9. Ernst and Young’s global presence, track record and previous relevant experience with AgriStack, a success story on deploying DPI in India, would enable the recipient to leverage lessons learned. The proposal reflected Ernst and Young’s cognizance of the importance of data integration and unified database development while keeping in mind the role of the smallholder farmer as part of the solution. Open source and interoperability as well as futuristic perspective to enable sustainability and scaling up after project implementation were some of the features of the proposal. In addition, the proposal demonstrated the understanding of utilizing the proposed solution as an agri-data exchange that could be linked across sectors, e.g., health, nutrition, etc., thus enhancing its potential benefits beyond the agricultural sector. On average, the CEC agreed that this was the best proposal with clear details of implementation, technology solution, staffing for the project proposed. Overall, average scores for the proposal were the highest (82.4).

Table 3: final evaluation results for the top seven proposals

	Background and technical experience	Staff Allocation and Expertise	Quality and coherence of proposal	Financial evaluation	Total
Ernst and Young	27.7	25.3	15.6	13.8	82.4
CIMMYT	25.5	23.8	16.6	13.6	79.5
Workshop Ventures	21.75	20.125	14	12.75	68.625
Microsave	20.7	18.9	13.8	13.6	67
Sathguru Management Consulting	20	14.5	15.25	11.25	61
AATF-AFRICA	18.6	15.6	10.6	11.2	56
Digital frontiers	16.4	11.1	14.4	9	50.9

VI. Institutional Profile of the Recipient

10. EY is a global professional services firm and one of the "Big Four," with a long-standing presence in consulting, tax, assurance, and advisory. With headquarters in London and a network of member firms worldwide, EY's mission is to "build a better working world" by helping institutions and governments navigate complex challenges, improve transparency, and create more inclusive, efficient systems. Their experience spans across sectors, from digital transformation and AI to cybersecurity and sustainability.

11. EY's work strongly aligns with IFAD's priorities, particularly in improving rural livelihoods through data-driven platforms and inclusive digital ecosystems. They bring solid experience in building secure, interoperable systems like digital public infrastructure and farmer registries, which are key to enhancing smallholder farmers' access to services, information, and markets. For example, in Australia, EY helped lead the design of a national agricultural innovation strategy, engaging producers, researchers, and policymakers to build robust digital data infrastructure. In India, they worked closely with a state government to assess agricultural value chains across 40 districts, integrate technology, and strengthen the agritech ecosystem through farmer upskilling and stakeholder collaboration. Globally, EY has contributed to the development of digital agriculture solutions and interoperable data models that serve smallholder farmers and support better coordination across institutions.

12. Beyond their technical expertise, EY adds value through its strong background in public–private partnerships and innovative finance. They have helped governments and multilateral institutions design blended finance models and attract private capital to drive rural transformation. Their leadership in impact investing, combined with cutting-edge innovation like AI-driven platforms, blockchain-based registries, and secure digital ecosystems developed through their wavespace™ hubs, makes them a strategic partner for building resilient, inclusive systems. With this combination of financial expertise and technological innovation, EY presented itself as well positioned to support IFAD's work in scaling digital public infrastructure and farmer registries across regions through the AgriConnect grant.

VII. Summary of Justification

13. Ernst and Young's proposal was selected for its comprehensive and well-detailed plan, leveraging their global experience and success with AgriStack in India. The proposal emphasized data integration, open source and interoperability, ensuring

sustainability and scalability. It also highlighted the potential for cross-sector benefits, receiving the highest average score of 82.4.

14. Ernst and Young is a global consulting firm with operations in over 150 countries, providing a vast geographical scope and extensive networks. Their ability to scale is demonstrated by their successful implementation of large-scale projects. Their track record includes a strong history of delivering innovative solutions, leveraging their expertise in data integration, open-source technologies, and interoperability to ensure sustainability and scalability across various sectors.