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## **Report on operational items discussed at the Executive Board consultation on 25 and 26 November 2025**

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**Action:** The Executive Board is invited to take note of the report.

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# Report on operational items discussed at the Executive Board consultation on 25 and 26 November 2025

## I. Introduction

1. The Executive Board met in hybrid modality on 25 and 26 November 2025 for consultations on the batch of country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) submitted for the Board's online review, and projects/programmes and grant proposals submitted for approval at the upcoming Executive Board session in December. The consultation complements the individual written comments shared by Membership with country teams, to which country teams provide written responses.
2. The items discussed included six investment projects, seven COSOPs (five of which were accompanied by a country strategy and programme evaluation), one regional strategic opportunities programme (RESOP), one non-sovereign operation, and one grant to the private sector. The COSOPs under review were for Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ghana, India, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan; the RESOP was for the Pacific Islands; and the investment proposals were for projects in Bangladesh, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Rwanda and Uganda. The non-sovereign operation focused on the East and Southern Africa region, and the private sector grant was for Uzbekistan, in the Near East, North Africa and Europe region.
3. In attendance at the session were representatives from 18 Member States on the Executive Board,<sup>1</sup> along with representatives from three other Member States<sup>2</sup> who took the floor when the COSOPs and projects for their respective countries were discussed. Representatives of Indigenous Peoples and the European Union also attended as observers.
4. The consultation was chaired by the Associate Vice-President, Department for Country Operations, and attended by the Managing Director, Office of Technical Delivery; the Managing Director, Office of Development Effectiveness; the General Counsel and Chief Legal and Governance Officer; the directors of the relevant divisions; country directors; project technical leads; the Secretary of IFAD; and other IFAD staff. Day one comprised a morning and an afternoon session, while day two had one morning session.
5. Delegates raised queries and provided strategic and technical feedback to the teams. Membership expressed broad support for the projects and COSOPs presented, particularly their emphasis on climate, environment, youth and women. Management also acknowledged Members' call for greater focus on agroecology and nutrition, noting that these priorities were reflected in projects presented throughout the year. Management thanked the Membership for their active engagement and thoughtful observations and queries, and expressed the hope that these had been addressed adequately. Members were reminded that they could also write to project teams to request written responses should they have any further questions. The discussion focused on the following issues:
  - **Rwanda and Uganda.** Members raised questions regarding environmental and social safeguards, especially in Uganda. Management highlighted that the National Oil Palm Project had a robust safeguard framework,<sup>3</sup> which included mitigation plans, annual audits, and grievance mechanisms at both community and national levels. An environmental assessment was under way

<sup>1</sup> Executive Board representatives from Algeria, Angola, Austria, Canada, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Finland, France, Germany, India, Mexico, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> Botswana, Luxembourg and Sri Lanka.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ifad.org/documents/48415603/49574683/Environmental+and+Social+Impact+Statement.pdf/dd37aab1-ed79-ac95-edd9-dc3e9aaf7552?t=1726609858016>.

to evaluate the cumulative impacts of oil palm expansion, building on lessons from the Kalangala site visited by Board members in 2023. For Rwanda, Management reaffirmed that the Kayonza Irrigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project – Phase II integrated lessons from the application of earlier safeguards, with particular attention to water use and nutrient or agrochemical run-off.

- **Burkina Faso and Central African Republic.** Members sought assurance on the viability of projects designed with financing gaps. Management clarified that such projects were modular: their economic analysis was based on secured financing, while additional resources were intended to extend outreach and impact. Management also emphasized the evolving use of local institutions and NGOs for supervision in fragile contexts.
- **Bangladesh.** Management acknowledged concerns about fiduciary risk and confirmed that mitigation measures drew on IFAD's previous experience of working with the implementing entity in the country.
- **COSOPs.** Management welcomed the support for the strategic direction, alignment with evaluation recommendations, and the emphasis on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). For Egypt, Management committed to exploring opportunities to access carbon markets through project-level sequestration as a co-benefit to investments. Feedback on the Dominican Republic COSOP was well received and would inform the Board's discussion on the document at its December session, particularly on the rural sector performance assessment. The Pacific Islands RESOP was well received. Management clarified that the RESOP built on regional priorities but did not discount country-specific approaches. For India, Management underscored the integration of nutrition through investments in underutilized crops and the focus on partnerships at the national level. For the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Management took note of the suggestion to strengthen engagement in sector working groups and policy dialogue.
- **Private sector.** Management thanked Members for supporting the growth of IFAD's private sector pipeline, and reaffirmed that non-sovereign operations followed rigorous selection processes, safeguarded IFAD's balance sheet, and pursued ambitious and balanced impact targets.

## II. Summary of proposals and discussions

### A. Asia and the Pacific

#### **Pacific Islands – Regional strategic opportunities programme (EB 2025/OR/19)**

6. The Fiji representative, on behalf of the Pacific Island countries, expressed support for the RESOP. Member States sought clarification on nutrition strategies, private sector engagement and logistics costs. IFAD confirmed that the RESOP addressed these issues and IFAD clarified that the regional strategy did not exclude country-specific projects.

#### **India – Country strategic opportunities programme (EB 2025/OR/25 + Add.1)**

7. Discussions centred on partnerships, nutrition, disability inclusion and implementation challenges. IFAD confirmed that the COSOP integrated strengthened institutional collaboration, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and inclusive targeting, as well as strengthened monitoring and evaluation, and financial management.

**Lao People's Democratic Republic – Country strategic opportunities programme (EB 2025/OR/20 + Add.1)**

8. Member States welcomed the COSOP's alignment with national priorities and integration of climate resilience considerations. Questions focused on policy engagement and agroecology. IFAD confirmed that the COSOP foresaw strengthened in-country engagement and use of SSTC.

**Sri Lanka – Country strategic opportunities programme (EB 2025/OR/21)**

9. Membership welcomed the COSOP's strong focus on rural poverty reduction and its alignment with the Government's national priorities.

**Bangladesh – Growth for Climate Resilient and Environmental Entrepreneurship and Nutrition (GREEN) (EB 2025/146/R.2)**

10. Member States welcomed GREEN's design and the Government's ownership of the project, underscoring the importance of governance and inclusive market engagement. In response to Member States' queries, IFAD explained that strengthened fiduciary systems, and support for value chain development and climate-smart technologies were incorporated into the project.

**B. East and Southern Africa**

**Botswana – Botswana Livestock Commercialization Project (BoLCoP) (EB 2025/146/R.3)**

11. The Government of Botswana expressed support for the project. Member States sought clarification on sustainability, private sector engagement and nutrition focus. IFAD explained that a non-sovereign operation had been designed with a commercial bank to complement this sovereign operation in order to provide a line of credit to livestock farmers and enterprises. Nutrition-sensitive approaches such as awareness-raising and household diet diversity were embedded in the project. Sustainability would be ensured by working with government agencies and the private sector.

**Rwanda – Kayonza Irrigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project – Phase II (KIIWP2) (additional financing) (EB 2025/146/R.4)**

12. Member States welcomed the proposal's focus on climate-resilient irrigation, catchment rehabilitation and inclusive farm business development. Members asked if safeguards were properly in place. Management reaffirmed that phase II of the project integrated lessons from earlier safeguard implementation, with particular attention to water use and nutrient or agrochemical run-off. Management explained that drip irrigation was unsuitable given local topography. Management underscored that a comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan and grievance redress mechanism were in place. The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources had confirmed full alignment with national strategies. IFAD explained that the financing gap was the result of price escalations linked to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

**Uganda – National Oil Palm Project (NOPP) (additional financing) (EB 2025/146/R.5)**

13. Member States raised questions on environmental risks and environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs). IFAD confirmed that ESIAs were a prerequisite to all investments and required National Environment Management Authority clearance and a 120-day public display by IFAD. Management highlighted the project's robust safeguards framework,<sup>4</sup> including mitigation plans, annual audits, and grievance mechanisms at both community and national levels. An environmental assessment was under way to evaluate the cumulative impacts of oil palm expansion, building on lessons from the Kalangala site, which Executive Board representatives had visited in 2023. Extension officers monitored safeguards, and a

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ifad.org/documents/48415603/49574683/Environmental+and+Social+Impact+Statement.pdf/dd37aab1-ed79-ac95-edd9-dc3e9aaf7552?t=1726609858016>.

grievance redress mechanism was in place at all levels. Regarding the modest midterm results, it was explained that the delays stemmed from late ESIA approvals. The project featured strong safeguards to ensure proper land acquisition through the willing buyer/willing seller principle. This was already under implementation in the current NOPP and would continue into the additional financing phase. Farmers had been organized into small groups, with their leaders delegated responsibility for tracking encroachment on sensitive areas. A question was raised about a past allegation related to the private sector company Bidco Uganda Limited on land expropriation. Management clarified that no complaints had been registered in relation to Bidco's practices, therefore no reputational issues were implied. In addition, all reports, studies and audits related to Bidco's operations were publicly disclosed.

## **C. Latin America and the Caribbean**

### **Dominican Republic – Country strategic opportunities programme (EB 2025/OR/22 + Add.1)**

14. Member States supported the Dominican Republic COSOP and noted the integration of recommendations from the country strategy and programme evaluation conducted by the Independent Office of Evaluation of IFAD. They asked for more information on the assessment framework – particularly the indicators on undernourishment and the rural sector performance assessment, role of the tourism sector in expanding market access for small-scale farmers, and the expected improvements in financial inclusion that would be realized through the partnership with a public development bank under the upcoming Sustainable Water Management and Productive Inclusion of Smallholder Farmers project (RIEGO+). Management provided clear and complete responses to all questions.

## **D. Near East, North Africa and Europe**

### **Tajikistan – Country strategic opportunities programme (EB 2025/OR/27)**

15. The representative of Tajikistan expressed strong support for the COSOP, noting its alignment with national priorities and underscoring IFAD's capacity to mobilize climate cofinancing. Members welcomed the focus on the livestock and dairy value chain. IFAD noted that private sector partnerships and rural financial services were central to the new project.

### **Egypt – Country strategic opportunities programme (EB 2025/OR/16 + Add.1)**

16. The representative of Egypt expressed strong support for the COSOP. Member States commended the non-lending focus and robust targeting. Management reassured Members that concerns about agrochemical use would be addressed through measures promoting climate-smart agriculture and integrated pest management.

## **E. West and Central Africa**

### **Burkina Faso – Strengthening Agricultural and Rural Infrastructure for Food Sovereignty Project (ORIAM-SA) (EB 2025/146/R.6)**

17. The Government of Burkina Faso reiterated the importance of the project to national food sovereignty. Questions focused on the financing gap, the internally displaced persons (IDPs) target and implementation readiness. IFAD confirmed a modular implementation approach, while mobilizing additional funds. On IDPs, Management confirmed that the 5 per cent inclusion target was achievable within the fragile context. Provisions in the project implementation manual plus the national Lijeeguoli Initiative would facilitate rapid start-up.

### **Central African Republic – Climate Resilient Agribusiness Promotion Programme (PARCA) (EB 2025/146/R.7)**

18. The Central African Republic expressed gratitude for the participatory nature of the programme's design. Key points discussed included the Government's in-kind

contribution (including land valuation and tax exemptions), geographic targeting (PARCA would be implemented in secure areas where IFAD operations were already being implemented), and the procurement of international technical assistance, via international bidding, for the first four years to build national capacity.

**Ghana – Country strategic opportunities programme  
(EB 2025/OR/14 + Add.1)**

19. Member States enquired about implementation challenges, sustainability and partnerships. Management clarified that investments had been restructured ex ante where needed. Sustainability would be addressed upfront in all projects and attention would be given to building local capacity. Partnerships would be pursued proactively.

**F. Non-sovereign private sector operations**

**AgDevCo Ventures: Scaling Early-Stage Agricultural Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises with High Impact Potential in East Africa  
(EB 2025/146/R.9 + Add.1)**

20. Member States welcomed the non-sovereign operation (NSO) subordinated-loan investment, noting complementarity with initiatives such as the Smallholder Safety Net Upscaling Programme and alignment with the Framework for IFAD's Non-Sovereign Private Sector Operations. Management confirmed that all NSO projects were subject to strict selection processes. The risks associated with this NSO would not affect IFAD's balance sheet, and impact targets were designed to balance development outcomes with financial sustainability. A number of members enquired about this type of investment in relation to IFAD's risk appetite. They also requested further clarity on the evolving NSO portfolio, including pipeline sourcing and alignment with COSOPs, intercreditor and currency risk management, and opportunities to sharpen impact objectives (e.g. for youth and nutrition). Management took note of these wider issues, indicating that some aspects were still under internal discussion given that NSOs were still at an early stage of implementation. Management underscored that the AgDevCo Ventures operation was designed to calibrate the impact–return trade-off through targeted support to early-stage agrifood enterprises (including nutrition-sensitive considerations). In general, sector and currency risk diversification and proactive engagement with country teams were foreseen as part of efforts to build a balanced, predominantly off-balance-sheet NSO portfolio within an evolving risk appetite and impact framework.

**G. Grants to the private sector**

**Uzbek REMIT: Unlocking finance and skills for rural entrepreneurs  
(EB 2025/146/R.8)**

21. Member States welcomed the grant and asked about the sustainability of the planned mini-offices. IFAD clarified that the associated costs would be covered by the partner bank. Written questions submitted on targeting, monitoring and sustainability were also addressed. Management underscored the extensive enhanced due diligence conducted, confirmed that there were no compliance concerns and that the grant was in alignment with international anti-money laundering, sanctions and governance standards.