
Republic of Mali
Country strategic opportunities programme
2026–2031
Management's response to Member States'
comments

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Comments by Japan	Management response
Japan has identified economic recovery as one of the priority areas in its country development cooperation policy for Mali, and has been providing support, primarily through technical cooperation, to address challenges such as the revitalization of economic activities including agriculture in Mali. The present programme is consistent with Japan's policy priorities, and Japan looks forward to its effective implementation. Japan also hopes to see collaboration with the Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) approach promoted by JICA. At the same time, Japan would like to note that certain parts of the target areas for support, particularly the northern and eastern regions, raise concerns regarding the security situation. Japan therefore requests that, during the future programme design phase, due attention be given to conducting a thorough analysis of the potential impact of the security situation on programme activities, as well as to developing concrete countermeasures in response.	The West and Central Africa Division (WCA) thanks the distinguished representative of Japan for the relevant question and the positive assessment of the proposed Mali country strategic opportunities programme (COSOP). WCA further welcomes Japan's interest in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), including through the SHEP approach. Opportunities for such collaboration will be explored during the design and implementation of relevant investments. WCA fully shares Japan's concern regarding the security situation in parts of Mali and its potential implications for programme implementation. The COSOP has been designed on the premise that fragility and insecurity are structural features of the operating environment, and must be factored explicitly into IFAD-supported programmes. Appendix VI of the COSOP includes a detailed fragility assessment identifying the principal dimensions and drivers of fragility and corresponding mitigation measures. The integrated country risk matrix in appendix XI complements this assessment by providing a framework for monitoring key risks throughout implementation. IFAD's approach in Mali will be to remain engaged where security conditions permit, while using its investments to address the underlying drivers of fragility. IFAD is already applying an adaptive management approach that allows implementation modalities, sequencing and – where necessary – geographical coverage to be adjusted as conditions evolve, while maintaining the overall strategic objectives. Several measures already being applied through the ongoing portfolio will inform future operations: • IFAD will remain engaged where security conditions permit implementation, subject to United Nations security and access assessments. Delivery arrangements will be adapted where direct access is constrained – an approach that has already proven effective in the Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflict and Climate Change (SD3C). • The programme will continue to work through community organizations, decentralized institutions and locally anchored mechanisms to maintain delivery capacity. The effectiveness of this approach has been demonstrated through SD3C, while the Multi-Energy for Resilience and Integrated Territorial Management Project (MERIT) provides for decentralized procurement at the commune level. • Investments will seek to build resilience rather than simply restore assets, combining productivity, finance, markets and employment with climate and natural resources management, and stronger institutions.

Comments by Japan	Management response
	• Underlying sources of local tension, including competition over land, water and other natural resources, will be addressed through participatory and community-based management approaches. • Partnerships with Government institutions, United Nations agencies, NGOs, community organizations and private sector actors will provide additional flexibility and delivery capacity in areas affected by insecurity. These measures reflect a central principle of the new COSOP: IFAD's response to multidimensional risks is adaptive engagement rather than disengagement. The objective is not to assume that security conditions will improve, but to ensure that IFAD and its partners have the management tools and operational flexibility to continue delivering when and where conditions permit. The potential impact of security conditions will be assessed in greater detail during the design of individual investments. Project design will include context-specific risk assessments, appropriate mitigation measures and flexible implementation arrangements. This will be complemented by continued coordination with the United Nations Country Team and the United Nations Department for Safety and Security, including security, access and programme criticality assessments, as applicable.