

Document: EB 2020/LOT/G.11
Date: 12 November 2020
Distribution: Public
Original: English

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Investing in rural people

President's report

Proposed grant to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

Strengthening the Supply of Improved Seeds and Improved Public-Private Partnerships in Central Africa Project

Note to Executive Board representatives

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For: Approval

Recommendation for approval

The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation for the proposed grant as contained in paragraph 20.

I. Background and compliance with the IFAD Policy for Grant Financing

1. The biggest challenge to increasing the production of staple crops and improving living conditions in rural areas is seed quality. The overall goal of the two-year Strengthening the Supply of Improved Seeds and Improved Public-Private Partnerships in Central Africa Project (SISCA) is to enhance the access of 48,000 smallholder farmers (SHFs) to quality cassava planting material and maize seed of superior varieties. Another key aspect of the grant is its focus on supporting and forging public-private partnerships (PPPs) and promoting the creation of youth- and women-led seed enterprises.
2. The three countries consider the use of quality maize and cassava seed and planting material essential to their agricultural development plans. They have a strong desire to rapidly transition toward the development of their seed sector, at both the farmer level for indigenous varieties and the formal seed system level, which uses improved varieties.
3. The proposed grant is aligned with IFAD corporate priorities. In line with global strategic priorities (in terms of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]), the grant project contributes to the achievement of SDGs 1, 2, 5 and 8 and addresses the issues related to risks and vulnerability of the rural poor. The project will contribute to the achievement of the three strategic objectives (SOs) of IFAD's current Strategic Framework (2016-2025): (i) increase poor rural people's productive capacities; (ii) increase poor rural people's benefits from market participation; and (iii) strengthen the environmental sustainability and climate resilience of poor rural peoples' economic activities.
4. SISCA contributes to the Mainstreaming Nutrition in IFAD – Action Plan 2019-2025 – in particular, action area 1: designing nutrition-sensitive country strategic opportunities programmes and projects – through its focus on growth and diversification of production by introducing and scaling-up of biofortified varieties of maize and cassava.
5. The grant also contributes to achievement of the SOs of the IFAD's Policy for Grant Financing. With its focus on improving the seed supply system in Central Africa, it will contribute to achieving the SO to "promote innovative, pro-poor approaches and technologies with the potential to be scaled up for greater impact". This grant is specifically aimed at increasing SHFs access to and adoption of superior crop varieties and quality seed. SHFs will be more productive, as they will have a choice between quality seeds of their own improved varieties and those of the introduced modern varieties.
6. The recipient was identified through a competitive selection process at design, in line with the grant policy and grant financing procedures, based on a call for proposals, and was approved by the Director, West and Central Africa Division.

II. Proposed project

7. The project's geographic scope will include three target countries in Central Africa: Cameroon, Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. SISCA's goal is to sustainably enhance the access of 48,000 SHFs (female and male) to quality seeds by increasing the operational efficiency of small and medium-sized enterprises

(SMEs) and Community Seed Production Groups (CSPGs) and improving their relationships with SHFs. SISCA will build competitive seed systems that significantly expand seed production, processing, marketing and distribution by boosting the capacity of the public and private sector in seed value chains.

8. The principal target group for this project will be 48,000 SHFs, formal seed companies, cooperatives, CSPGs, out-growers and seed traders, disaggregated by youth, women and men. By project end, the seed supply chain tiers will produce 360 metric ton of maize (hybrid and open pollinated varieties [OPV]) and 90 million stems for planting. Women face additional barriers and are more vulnerable to food insecurity. Youth and women are targeted at either the production or the trade level, which will offer them remunerative opportunities.
9. The project is also designed to yield benefits for government institutions and service providers. Government institutions, including each country's Ministry of Agriculture and its research and extension services, seed regulation bodies, and local municipalities will introduce or strengthen participatory processes that support project implementation, focusing on skill-building for staff in institutions involved in the project.
10. The project will be implemented over two years and will have the following main deliverable outcomes: (i) sufficient quality seed of both local (landrace) varieties and improved released varieties are produced and made available to growers at an affordable price; (ii) mechanisms for variety testing and registration consistent with the current legislative framework, and the production, control, certification and distribution of quality seeds through formal and informal market channels are strengthened; and (iii) strengthened capacity in managing the national seed system; in testing, registering and releasing new varieties; and in producing and certifying seeds.
11. SISCA will contribute to planned and ongoing programmes with seed system activities in the target countries, including the Youth Agropastoral Entrepreneurship Promotion Programme and the Commodity Value-Chain Development Support Project – Phase II, in Cameroon by providing an outreach and scaling-up gateway for strengthening cassava and maize seed systems. SISCA will also partner with the newly funded Inclusive and Resilient Rural Development Programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Congo, SISCA will partner with the beneficiaries of closed projects such as the Agricultural Value Chains Development Programme and the Rural Development Project in the Likouala, Pool and Sangha Departments.

III. Expected outcomes/outputs

12. The project is expected to have the following outcomes: (i) new varieties of cassava planting materials and maize evaluated and officially released, foundations for quality seed production laid; (ii) research staff competently managing all phases of the research cycle, including objective-setting, planning and implementation of trials, analysis, and reporting; (iii) enhanced capacity of existing SMEs, cooperatives, CSPGs and out-growers in seed production and delivery; (iv) well-established youth and women-led businesses strengthened and viable start-ups in the seed business created; and (v) strengthened capacity to manage the national seed system in testing, registering and releasing new varieties and in producing and certifying seeds.

13. Some expected outputs are:
- (i) Quality and certified seed for existing cassava and maize, and improved varieties of superior quality registered in the national variety catalogue and met with high demand;
 - (ii) Scientists and technicians trained in purity control and field management;
 - (iii) PPP template developed to ensure uptake of publicly developed varieties;
 - (iv) 390 cooperatives, CSPGs, out-growers and seed dealers trained in the seed business;
 - (v) At least 360 metric of quality maize seed (hybrid and OPV) produced and marketed;
 - (vi) At least 90 million quality cassava stems for planting produced and marketed during the life of the project;
 - (vii) 48,000 SHFs are made aware of improved varieties of cassava and maize and the benefits of quality seed;
 - (viii) 300 youth and women seed entrepreneurs are trained in the seed business;
 - (ix) National seed planning, allocation and inventory control systems in place;
 - (x) Policy issues identified and advice provided on key issues related to the development of the national seed system;
 - (xi) System for variety release and certification in place;
 - (xii) 60 seed inspectors (private and public) trained; and
 - (xiii) Six seed inspection protocols and associated processes are reviewed and revised, which will help to increase the supply of quality seed from improved varieties.

IV. Implementation arrangements

14. The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) will be the grant recipient. The project will be coordinated by the IITA regional office in Kinshasa. The office will include a project coordinator (IITA Country Representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), a seed specialist and an administration officer. SISCA funding will cover the full-time salary of (i) the seed specialist, who will be appointed to lead the implementation of the project and (ii) the administration officer and 30 per cent of the salary of (iii) the project coordinator. The Central Africa Hub in Yaoundé will support the project in financial management, procurement and other logistics.
15. National partners will be drawn from among the PPP partners: national seed services, quality control and certification agencies, research institutes, NGOs, farmers' organizations, youth and women's organizations, universities, local and national private-sector organizations and companies involved in maize seed and cassava planting material multiplication, seed initiatives, investment projects and subregional organizations (the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and the Regional Hub of Applied Research for the Development of the Central African Savannah). IFAD and other development partners have already implemented several catalytic projects and some that are ongoing, which will enable SISCA to hit the ground running.
16. A steering committee will oversee the project and issue strategic recommendations on implementation and management. The steering committee will be composed of the project implementation stakeholders: IITA, IFAD and technical and financial partners, where appropriate. Implementers from other regional programmes and

other stakeholders may be invited to steering committee meetings. The steering committee will meet twice a year.

17. There will be no deviations from standard financial reporting and audit procedures.

V. Indicative project costs and financing

18. Total project cost is calculated at US\$1,250,000, to be financed by an IFAD grant in the amount of US\$1,000,000 and IITA cofinancing in the amount of US\$250,000.
19. The grant will be fully managed and executed by IITA. There shall be no flow of grant funds to the entities that partner with IITA (IRDA, MINADER, ICRA, ONASEM, INRA, CNSA, INERA, SENACEM, IRAF and CIAM)¹ or to other grant sub-recipients.

Table 1

Costs by component and cofinancier

(United States dollars)

<i>Components</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>IITA</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Component 1	141 000	18 000	159 000
2. Component 2	460 000	32 000	492 000
3. Component 3	224 000		224 000
4. Project management	83 000	180 000	263 000
5. Management fee	72 000		72 000
6. CSP fee (2%)	20 000		20 000
7. Staff (in-kind)		20 000	20 000
Total	1 000 000	250 000	1 250 000

Table 2

Costs by expenditure category and financier

(United States dollars)

<i>Expenditure category</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>IITA</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Consultants	79 000		79 000
2. Travel and allowances	37 000		37 000
3. Goods services inputs	333 000	50 000	383 000
4. Workshop and events	238 000		238 000
5. Equipment and material	8 000		8 000
6. Staffing costs	180 000	180 000	360 000
7. Operating costs	33 000		33 000
8. Management fee	72 000		72 000
9. CSP fee (2%)	20 000		20 000
10. Staff (in-kind)		20 000	20 000
Total	1 000 000	250 000	1 250 000

¹ Respectively: Research and Development Institute for the Agri-Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Central African Institute for Agricultural Research, National Seed Office, National Institute for Agricultural Research, National Centre for Improved Seeds, National Institute for Agronomic Study and Research, *Service National des Semences*, Agricultural and Forestry Research Institute and Center for the Introduction, Adaptation and Vegetative Propagation of Food and Fruit Crops.

VI. Recommendation

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

RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to partially finance the Strengthening the Supply of Improved Seeds and Improved Public-Private Partnerships in Central Africa Project, shall provide a grant to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in an amount of one million United States dollars (US\$1,000,000) for a two-year period, and upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented herein.

Gilbert F. Houngbo
President

Results-based Logical Framework

Objectives-hierarchy		Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Frequency/ deadline	Assumptions
Goal	To enhance access of 48,000 SHF (female and male), in a sustainable way, to quality seeds and planting material of maize and cassava through increased operational efficiency of SMEs and CSPGs	% of increase yield in cassava and maize in project sites	Baseline data for ex-post impact assessment	Baseline to be confirmed early in Y1	Country stakeholders participate, collaborate and integrate SISCA approaches and innovations
Component 1: Sufficient quality seed produced of both local (indigenous) varieties and improved released varieties made available to growers					
	Objective: Enhance the work started with national research institutes for the variety breeding, selection and release of seeds in order to address new challenges and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New varieties of cassava planting materials and maize evaluated and officially released, Enhanced capacity in techniques and process of variety release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual work programs and reports Variety release committee minutes 	6 months	SHF, SMEs and CSPGs interested and willing to participate in sector growth
	Outcome: Improved varieties of cassava and maize identified and released	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of varieties for which SMEs and CSPGs are identified and engaged Gender concerns recognized and integrated in the evaluation and release of improved varieties Research staff competently managing all phases of the research cycle, including objective setting, planning and implementation of trials, analysis, and reporting 	Annual survey	Yearly	Active collaboration of national research institutes, SME and CSPGs and seed regulatory bodies
Key outputs					
	1.1. 3 National needs assessment reports of SHF communities completed and published	# needs assessment reports	Assessment reports	6 months	SHF to participate
	1.2. Improved cassava and maize varieties introduced, described, maintained and registered (3 cassava; 3 maize)	# improved cassava and maize varieties introduced, described, and registered	Annual work programs and reports	6 months	Active collaboration of national research institutes, SME and CSPGs and seed regulatory bodies
	1.3. Vitro plantlets and tissue culture plants produced for micro propagation	# Mt of vitro plantlets and tissue culture plants produced for micro propagation			
	1.4. Sufficient EGS for maize produced	# Mt of EGS for maize			
	1.5. 60 seed technicians and scientists trained with respect to skills necessary for the processes of testing, selection and maintenance of varieties; and in-vitro technologies	# seed technicians and scientists trained	Annual work programs and training report	Year 1	Active collaboration of national research institutes
Component 2: Mechanisms for the variety testing and registration according to adopted legislation framework and production, control, certification and distribution of quality seeds through formal and informal market channels strengthened					
	Objective: Contribute to the development of seed production and distribution	Enhanced capacity of SMEs, CSPGs and agro-dealers, including youth and women-led businesses, in seed production and delivery	Annual work programs and reports	Annual	SHF, seed companies, CSPGs, youth and women willing to participate
	Outcome : Incomes of SME, CSPGs, youth and women engaged in commercial seed production increased compared to control groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SME and CSPGs involved in cassava and maize seed business interested and willing to participate in sector growth At least 6 SME have established maize seed businesses in the program areas At least 150 CSPGs engaged in the production and distribution of improved cassava seed 	Annual survey	Yearly	Active collaboration of youth, women, SME and CSPGs
Key outputs					

Objectives-hierarchy		Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Frequency/ deadline	Assumptions
	2.1 15 SMEs trained in seed business and provided on-site professional services	# seed companies trained in seed business	Annual work programs, reports	Annual	SMEs willing to participate
	2.2 390 CSPGs trained in seed business, of which 40% youth/women led	# CSPGs strengthened, of which # of youth/women-led	Annual work programs, reports	Annual	CSPGs and youth and women willing to participate
	2.3 300 youth and women seed entrepreneurs trained in seed business	# of youth and women trained	Annual work programs, reports	6 months	Youth and women willing to participate
	2.4 Awareness of improved varieties increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # of demonstrations and promotion conducted - Size of target audience - # and quality of awareness products 	Effectiveness evaluations, reports	Annual	CSPGs and youth and women willing to participate
	2.1 90 million of cassava stems per year and 360 Mt of maize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mt of formal maize per year - Nb cassava stems per year 	Annual work programs, reports	Annual	SMEs, CSPGs and youth and women willing to participate
	2.2 480 Farmer Promoters and extension agents trained on agronomic performance of varieties and associated certified seed;	# Farmer Promoters and extension agents trained and # of women and youth	Annual work programs, reports	6 months	Extension agents, youth and women willing to participate
	2.3 48,000 smallholder farmers made aware of improved varieties of cassava and maize	# SHF reached through awareness activities	Annual work programs, reports	6 months	SHF willing to participate
	2.4 Linkages to Matching Grant Funding facilitated	Nb of SMEs, CSPGs and youth and women seed entrepreneurs supported through grants	Annual work programs, reports	Annual	SMEs, CSPGs, youth and women willing to participate
Component 3: Capacity to manage the national seed system in testing, registering and releasing new varieties and in production and certification of their seed strengthened					
	Objective: Strengthen the capacity of national regulatory bodies to manage the overall seed system	National seed PPP established for seed production planning, for solving policy issues and for raising awareness	Annual work programs, reports	Annual	Country stakeholders collaborate
	Outcome : Improved enabling environment for seed production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forward planning systems developed and operational ▪ At least 30 persons attend each multi-stakeholder forum in each country 	Forum report	Annual	Active collaboration of stakeholders
Key outputs					
	3.1 6 national planning sessions (1 per year and per country) to develop and ensure the implementation of the road map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National management system established - Allocation procedures operationalized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seed production plans - Allocation procedures 	Annual	Active collaboration with national partners
	3.2 15 SMEs and 390 CSPGs and agro-dealers sensitized on the seed law and regulations	# of SMEs, CSPGs and agro-dealers, including youth and women, sensitized on the seed law and regulations	Annual work programs, reports	Annual	Active collaboration with national partners
	3.3 Policy issues identified and advice provided on key issues related to development of the national seed system	# Policy issues identified and advice provided on key issues related	Annual work programs, reports	Annual	Active collaboration with national partners
	3.4 System for variety release and certification established	System for variety release and certification established and operational	System for variety release and certification	Annual	Active collaboration with national partners
	3.5 60 seed inspectors trained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nb seed inspectors trained 	Annual work programs, reports	Annual	Active collaboration with national partners
	3.6 6 seed inspection protocols and associated processes reviewed, revised and contribute to increasing the supply of quality seed of improved varieties (5 cassava and 5 maize)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - # seed inspection protocols and associated processes 	Seed inspection, protocols and associated processes	Annual	Active collaboration with national partners