



Investing in rural people

Executive Board

President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grants window to Conexión for Food Heritage for Youth-inclusive Agrifood Systems

Project ID: 2000004759

Document: EB 2024/LOT/G.6/Rev.1

Date: 19 September 2024

Distribution: Public

Original: English

FOR: APPROVAL

Action: The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation contained in paragraph 12.

Technical questions:

Rossana Polastri

Regional Director
Latin America and the Caribbean Division
e-mail: r.polastri@ifad.org

Daniel Anavitarte

Regional Specialist
Latin America and the Caribbean Division
e-mail: d.anavitarte@ifad.org

President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional grants window to Conexión for Food Heritage for Youth-inclusive Agrifood Systems

I. Background and compliance with the IFAD Regular Grants Policy

1. The Latin America and the Caribbean region is home to approximately 163 million young people aged between 15 and 29, constituting nearly a quarter of the region's total population. About 18 per cent of these young people reside in rural areas, where they encounter challenges similar to their urban counterparts, compounded by the context of limited development opportunities in rural settings. Among the main challenges they face are poor employment prospects, partly due to limited access to education and training opportunities, productive resources, financial services and markets. Rural employment options often entail precarious, informal agriculture-centric work that may not align with the aspirations of young people.
2. Food Heritage for Youth-inclusive Agrifood Systems is aligned with the goal and objectives of the IFAD Regular Grants Policy (2021),¹ aimed at fostering sustainable and inclusive rural transformation and advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project resonates with IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016–2025, particularly in its overarching goal of enabling rural people to overcome poverty and achieve food security through remunerative, sustainable and resilient livelihoods. By increasing rural poor people's productive capacities, market engagement, environmental sustainability and climate resilience, the project adheres to IFAD's strategic objectives. The project also addresses SDGs 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 13 (climate action). Moreover, it supports additional SDGs related to reduced inequalities (10), responsible consumption and production (12), life on land (15) and partnerships for the goals (17).
3. The recipient of the grant was identified through competitive selection. Eighteen organizations specializing in youth, nutrition and food heritage were invited to submit proposals. Of the six proposals received, the Competitive Screening Evaluation Team identified the proposal from the NGO Conexión as the most suitable. Subsequently, entry into pipeline was approved by the Operational Strategy and Policy Guidance Committee Chair on 6 December 2023.

II. The proposed project

4. The overall goal of the project is to promote innovative pathways for rural development by creating sustainable economic opportunities for rural youth in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras. The objective is to empower rural youth to take a leading role in the sustainable harnessing of food, cultural heritage and environmental conservation in their territories. This will be achieved through the adaptation and validation of a model that includes: (i) the development of a set of comprehensive skills tailored to the potential and challenges of their territories; (ii) the creation of sustainable economic opportunities in agrifood and forestry systems, gastronomy and cultural tourism; (iii) the mobilization of youth to drive the revitalization of rural territories through a territorial approach; and (iv) knowledge management as the foundation for the revitalization of rural territories.
5. The project directly targets 3,600 rural youth aged between 16 and 35, characterized by low incomes, low levels of nutrition and a risk of migrating from their territories in search of better economic and educational opportunities. The

¹ See EB 2021/132/R.3.

project will prioritize the participation of young women (60 per cent of the target group).

6. The project will be implemented over two years and will have the following components: (i) **comprehensive youth training**, which aims to provide training centred on the sustainable use of food and cultural heritage; (ii) **sustainable economic activities**, which aims to ensure that rural youth have access to jobs and sustainable businesses linked to agrifood and forestry systems, gastronomy and cultural tourism; (iii) **youth engagement in the comprehensive revitalization of rural territories**, which aims to equip young individuals with the skills and tools necessary to actively participate in advocacy for their territories; and (iv) **knowledge as the foundation for revitalizing rural territories**, which aims to generate knowledge and foster learning related to the sustainable use of food and cultural heritage as a foundation for the revitalization of rural territories.

III. Expected outcomes/outputs

7. The project is expected to have the following outcomes: (i) 3,600 rural youth will possess the technical, life, digital and business-related skills required to create and advocate for sustainable economic opportunities rooted in the use of food and cultural heritage in their territories; (ii) 1,660 rural youth will improve their income and invigorate their territory through sustainable economic activities; (iii) 700 rural youth will engage in mobilization and advocacy activities to promote food and cultural heritage; and (iv) the knowledge and lessons generated by the project will be used for the revitalization of rural territories, and systematized for dissemination, integration, replication and expansion by IFAD and other public and private sector institutions.

IV. Implementation arrangements

8. Conexión will be the recipient of the grant and the implementation agency of the project. To implement the project in the four target countries, Conexión will collaborate with five consortium partners: (i) MANQ'A SOS in the Plurinational State of Bolivia; (ii) MIGA in the Plurinational State of Bolivia; (iii) Conexión Colombia; (iv) Conexión Guatemala; and (v) the Mennonite Social Action Commission (CASM) in Honduras. All partners, except for MIGA, will be subrecipients and will implement the project activities in their respective countries. MIGA will participate as a partner, but under a direct contracting arrangement to provide consulting services.
9. Conexión will lead and be accountable for the comprehensive administrative and financial management for IFAD. It will maintain the accounting, internal control and filing systems of the project, and oversee the funds managed by the subrecipient partners. A project implementation unit will be established, comprising the regional coordination team, coordinators from Colombia, Guatemala and Honduras, the communication manager, the financial controller and the regional administrator.
10. There are no deviations from the standard procedures for financial reporting and audits.

V. Indicative project costs and financing

11. The total cost of the project is US\$2.0 million (table 1). The project will be financed through: (i) an IFAD grant of US\$1.0 million (50 per cent of total costs); and (ii) cofinancing from Conexión, comprising a cash contribution of US\$0.80 million (40 per cent) and an in-kind contribution of US\$0.20 million (10 per cent).

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

<i>Component</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>Conexión^a</i>	<i>Conexión in-kind^b</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Comprehensive youth training	411.80	397.20	200.80	1 009.80
2. Sustainable economic activities	225.92	204.63	-	430.55
3. Youth engagement in the comprehensive revitalization of rural territories	108.53	77.20	-	185.73
4. Knowledge as the foundation for revitalizing rural territories	50.24	3.79	-	54.03
5. Project management	203.51	116.38	-	319.89
Total	1 000.00	799.20	200.80	2 000.00

^a The cash cofinancing of US\$799,200 comprises the contributions of Conexión Bolivia of US\$218,889, Conexión Colombia of US\$186,264, Conexión Guatemala of US\$82,935, MANQ'A SOS of US\$225,275 and CASM of US\$85,837.

^b The in-kind cofinancing of US\$200,800 comprises contributions of Conexión Bolivia of US\$24,000, Conexión Colombia of US\$72,000, Conexión Guatemala of US\$52,000 and MANQA SOS of US\$52,800.

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

<i>Expenditure category</i>	<i>IFAD</i>	<i>Conexión</i>	<i>Conexión in-kind</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Salaries and allowances	157.22	143.89	-	301.11
2. Workshop, training, equipment and materials	2.00	1.00	24.00	27.00
3. Goods, services and inputs (consultancies)	227.35	60.77	-	288.12
4. Subgrants	498.00	580.31	176.80	1 255.11
5. Operating costs (travel and allowances)	50.01	13.24	-	63.25
6. Management fees	65.42	-	-	65.42
Total	1 000.00	799.21	200.80	2 000.01

VI. Recommendation

12. 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, Food Heritage for Youth-inclusive Agrifood Systems, shall provide a grant of one million United States dollars (US\$1,000,000) to Conexión for a two-year period 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

	Objectives hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
Goal	Promote innovative pathways for rural development by creating sustainable economic opportunities for Rural Youth. This, to promote food heritage and cultural, environmental conservation, and the leading role of young people as agents of change	113 (30%) businesses increase their business volume (sales) within 1 year after receiving support from the project	Project monitoring reports	A stable economic and political environment is maintained in the territories and/or countries, which favours the continuity and growth of the ventures supported by the project.
		2,160 (60%) Rural Youth supported by the project declare that they have incorporated at least 5 local and nutritious products into their diets	Surveys at the end of training and/or support for employment or entrepreneurship	There is sufficient supply and diversity of local and nutritious products in the territories.
Objectives	Promote the empowerment of Rural Youth to take a leading role in the sustainable harnessing of food and cultural heritage, as well as environmental conservation in their territories. This will be achieved through: (i) the development of comprehensive skills, (ii) the creation of sustainable economic opportunities in AFS, gastronomy and cultural tourism, (iii) the mobilization of youth to drive the revitalization of rural territories through a territorial approach.	378 (60%) businesses remain operating after 6 months	Monitoring reports on businesses	The economic and political environment of the territories and/or countries does not experience significant changes that could affect the continuity of the ventures supported by the project.
		At least 3 municipalities have institutionalized initiatives that promote sustainable economic activities for rural youth	Signed agreements	Municipalities are willing to adopt and institutionalize initiatives that promote sustainable economic activities for rural youth.
		2,520 (70%) young people and women report having improved their diets after participating in the training processes	Baseline and output of training processes	There is sufficient supply and diversity of local and nutritious products in the territories.
Outcomes/ outputs	Outcome C1 Rural Youth have the technical, life, business and digital skills required to create and advocate for sustainable economic opportunities rooted in the use of food and cultural heritage in their territories.	3,600 Rural Youth (Bolivia: 2,100, Colombia: 600, Guatemala: 500 and Honduras: 400) complete a comprehensive training program comprising technical, life, business, and digital skills.	Training completion certificate issued by a competent authority. Reports on training processes	Acceptance and active participation of young people and women in training programmes, backed by the support of their families and communities.
		At least 60% will be women and 60% will self-identify as indigenous.		
	Outcome C2 Rural Youth enhance their income and revitalize their territory by generating sustainable economic activities rooted in the sustainable use of food and cultural heritage, applying a triple impact approach	1,008 (70%) of Rural Youth increase their income compared to the baseline through access to employment (Bolivia: 587, Colombia: 177, Guatemala and Honduras: 244)	Baseline study System reports	Willingness of young male and female entrepreneurs to identify and cater to market demands and consumer preferences and embrace sustainable business practices.
		540 (60%) of Rural Youth increase their income compared to the baseline through the creation and/or strengthening of businesses (Bolivia: 257, Colombia: 129, Guatemala and Honduras: 154), of which 30% seek triple impact.	Baseline study System reports	Appreciation by the local community and consumers of the food and cultural heritage promoted by young entrepreneurs.
	Outcome C3 Rural Youth are actively involved in mobilization and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting their food and cultural heritage	700 Rural Youth engage in youth mobilization activities promoted by the project	Reports on youth mobilization activities	Recognition and institutional support from local and national governments for initiatives led by young people and women to revitalize food and cultural heritage.
80 Rural Youth create digital content aimed at revitalizing their territory and its food and cultural heritage, using innovative methodologies introduced by the project		Digital content created. Activity reports	Collaboration and synergies among various groups of youth and women to enhance mobilization and advocacy initiatives and achieve a more significant impact on the revitalization of their territories.	
Outcome C4 The project's knowledge and lessons learned will be used for the revitalization of rural territories, and	7 municipalities involved in the project integrate components of food heritage, triple-impact businesses, and environmental conservation into their public initiatives	Agreed-upon work plans. Activity reports	Effective collaboration with public actors, community organizations, private individuals, and academia to create	

	Objectives hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
	systematized to be disseminated, included, replicated, and expanded by IFAD and other public and private sector institutions.	80% of the individuals with whom project knowledge is shared perceive it as relevant and beneficial for the revitalization of rural territories	Surveys at the end of knowledge-sharing event	and disseminate knowledge about the revitalization of rural territories. Willingness of rural communities to practically implement the knowledge derived from the project within their territories.
Key activities by component	A C1.1 Comprehensive training program, focused on the sustainable use of food and cultural heritage, taught in all project regions. It includes: (i) technical skills related to AFS, gastronomy and cultural tourism, with a focus on food and cultural heritage; (ii) life skills, with emphasis on gender, nutrition, innovation, and leadership for rural revitalization; (iii) business skills; and (iv) digital skills.	The training program integrates new innovative methodologies for working with rural youth: (i) A cross-cutting module on food and cultural heritage; (ii) a cross-cutting module on good environmental practices; (iii) a module focusing on life skills for creativity and innovation, with a focus on transformative leadership in rural territories; (iv) integration of the Migáfonos methodology in the teaching processes.	Modules and content developed	Support from community leaders and authorities to promote the active participation of youth and women in skills development programmes. Effective collaboration with public actors, community organizations and other stakeholders to identify and meet specific training needs.
		7 partnerships with public entities for the implementation of training processes (certifications, investments in the program, provision of spaces, etc.)	Signed agreements	
	A C2.1 Employment support services (training for enhanced employability and assistance with job placement) implemented	1,440 of Rural Youth benefit from employment support services	Baseline study Systems reports	Active collaboration with local companies and employers to facilitate young people's access to work placements and employment prospects.
	A C2.2 Entrepreneurship support services (training in entrepreneurship, advisory services, mentorship, and access to markets) implemented	900 Rural Youth receive support for initiating and/or enhancing their businesses	Baseline study System reports	Partnering with mentors to offer advice and strategic guidance for entrepreneurs.
	A C2.3 Seed capital competitions	80 Rural Youth receive seed capital for their businesses	Activity reports	A considerable number of young people possess innovative business ideas
	A C3.1 Rural Youth have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively engage in advocacy, consultative, and representative roles.	700 Rural Youth trained in political advocacy with a focus on project themes and rights to land	Reports on training processes	Rural youth are motivated to engage in advocacy and representation roles within their communities
	A C3.2 Innovations implemented to enhance youth mobilization	4 innovations implemented: (i) Rural Youtubers and TikTokers; (ii) Así sabe mi tierra; (iii) Mi Cocina, Mi Herencia; and (iv) Activate against Climate Change	Activity reports	Reliable access to digital technology, including internet and mobile devices, in rural and peri-urban areas where youth and women live.
	A C3.3 Young digital community revitalizing their local territories	A functioning digital community with at least 80 active young participants across the three countries.	Reports on the digital community's activities	
	A C4.1 Knowledge and evidence-based learning on how the sustainable use of food and cultural heritage contributes to enhancing rural livelihoods, produced, and widely disseminated.	Food heritage studies (Registros de Patrimonio Alimentario) for 3 territories carried out and disseminated	Food heritage study Reports on knowledge-sharing events	Use of effective and accessible communication channels to widely disseminate knowledge materials to relevant stakeholders, including rural communities, local leaders, non-governmental organizations, and decision makers.
		Intervention strategies for each territory developed	Internal strategy document	
Dialogue and discussion sessions with relevant stakeholder implemented		Activity reports		
Systematization of the project's approach to food and cultural heritage, with a focus on nutritional integration for rural youth, developed and disseminated		Systematizing document Reports on knowledge-sharing events		
	In-house practical study, focusing on continuous learning and testing how to attract private sector engagement in rural youth empowerment initiatives	Study		

	Objectives hierarchy	Objectively verifiable indicators	Means of verification	Assumptions
		Project communication strategy developed and implemented	Strategy document	
		Scaling-up strategy developed	Strategy document	