



# COUNCIL

## Hundred and Sixty-eight Session

29 November-3 December 2021

### The Hand-in-Hand Initiative

#### Executive Summary

This report summarizes recent progress in implementation of the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative, with specific reference to:

- a) brief case reports of progress in sixteen of the most advanced HIH-supported countries of the total of 45 countries now in the HIH Initiative;
- b) lessons learned from these and other HIH Initiative implementation experiences;
- c) implications and benefits of designating the HIH Initiative as a Priority Programme Area (a *better life* 6) in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31;
- d) the fortuitous positioning of the HIH Initiative as a platform for supporting multistakeholders and cross-sectoral implementation of national programmes for agri-food systems transformation;
- e) progress on the development of a dashboard to ensure effective delivery, management, governance and impact of the Initiative; and
- f) challenges and opportunities for using HIH Initiative facilities to reinforce the development pillar in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in food crisis countries.

This report builds on information provided in previous reports to the Programme Committee and the Council. Additional information on the Initiative is available on the [Hand-in-Hand webpage](#) on FAO's corporate website and on the [Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform](#).

### **Suggested action by the Programme Committee and the Council**

The Programme Committee and the Council are invited to take note of the progress made on the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative and to provide guidance, as deemed appropriate.

In particular, the Committee may wish to:

- a) welcome the continuing growth in the number of countries participating in the Initiative and of the ways participating countries are using the Initiative to strengthen and accelerate existing programmes or develop ambitious new ones, build national capabilities, and strengthen national ownership of the sustainable development process;
- b) welcome with appreciation the actions and outcomes at country level and highlight the country-owned and country-led nature of the Initiative;
- c) recognize the extraordinary challenges faced by the HIH Initiative-supported countries during the past 18 months and appreciate the flexibility and agility of the HIH Initiative-supported programmes to sustain work-in-progress under extreme crisis conditions;
- d) recognize that all FAO Members may participate in the HIH Initiative, not only as direct or indirect beneficiaries, but also as development and resource partners through multiple channels, including direct assistance, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, in-kind technical support, support to public-private exchanges, and support to mechanisms such as the Flexible Multi-donor Mechanism (FMM) which affords the flexibility to respond quickly to emerging needs and to develop new tools and training jointly with some of the least developed countries;
- e) welcome the trend toward larger and more ambitious programming, spurred by the HIH Initiative's commitment to promote and sustain more transformative, inclusive and collective action;
- f) recognize the progress made on the development of a monitoring dashboard based on the establishment of rigorous, empirically based typologies, as well as its functions not only as a monitoring system for reporting progress, but also as a knowledge management repository and a communications platform for the host government and partners;
- g) take note of the diverse benefits presented by the designation of the HIH Initiative as one of the Twenty Priority Programme Areas under the Strategic Framework 2022-31, in particular the ability to use the HIH Initiative as proof of concept and learning laboratory for an Organization-wide shift from a fixed, project orientation to a more dynamic, scaled-up programmatic approach; and
- h) appreciate the HIH Initiative as a transparent and accountable working platform for improved multisectoral and multistakeholders collaboration to foster accelerated agri-food systems transformation at national level.

The Council is invited to provide guidance, as deemed appropriate.

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## I. Introduction

1. This report responds to requests by the Programme Committee at its 130th Session (CL 166/9) and the Council at its 166th Session (CL 166/REP) to provide regular updates on progress and results achieved in the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative.
2. The Initiative was announced by the Director-General on the side lines of the UN General Assembly in late September 2019. A few weeks later, in October and November 2019, FAO Members that met objective criteria of status as Land-locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) or Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and that were also Least Developed Countries (LDCs), or other Least Developed Countries, Food Crisis Countries as defined by the Global Network against Food Crises, and countries with large poor populations were invited by the Director-General to participate in the Initiative. Since then, and often following extensive consultation, countries, at an average rate of about two per month, have submitted their requests to benefit from the Initiative's many special programmatic supports. Today, 45 countries have expressed their desire to participate, including: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Chad, Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tuvalu, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe.
3. Early experience confirms that the HIH Initiative offers FAO Members and their development partners a powerful new way of strengthening, expanding and sustaining ambitious national programmes for agri-food systems transformation priorities to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2 and 10. The HIH Initiative offers the world's largest and most capable platform for data and information exchange and analysis, the HIH Geospatial Platform. Under the HIH Initiative, multi-disciplinary, cross-organizational FAO technical task teams work with national counterparts to apply analytical methods that help identify territories and populations where programmes and investments to unlock market-oriented opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth have potential to eradicate poverty, end malnutrition and measurably reduce inequality.
4. More than 20 Members have completed (or are near to completing) the necessary technical studies and have agreed (or will soon agree) upon programme entry points, value chains, territories and markets (typically both national and international), as well as required investments. Most have begun preliminary partner consultations, the remaining are expected to begin within the next two quarters. Concise concept notes are being prepared to summarize key study findings, government-selected priority objectives, a preliminary programme outline, theory of change for achieving measurable progress on SDGs 1, 2 and 10, and key programme metrics. These will be supported by needs assessments for both public and private investments. The concept notes and investment needs assessments (or "prospectuses") will be used as a basis for matchmaking with investment partners and other programme partners.
5. This report provides additional detail highlighting progress in 16 countries. The selection is based on a desire to demonstrate the range and diversity of country experiences, and is limited in number only for reasons of space. Additional country highlights will be presented in future reports.

## II. Country Progress Highlights

### A. Angola

6. In a letter addressed to the Director-General, the Minister of Economy and Planning expressed the intention of the government to draw upon the analytical tools and partnership supports of the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative to strengthen and accelerate the impact of the Programme of Support for Production, Diversification of Exports and Import Substitution (PRODESI), one of the principal National Programmes of the National Development Plan (PDN 2018-2022).
7. With substantial technical support from FAO, Angola has just completed the first ever national agricultural survey, and efforts are currently under way to process the data and use it as a

primary input for strengthening the work under PRODESI. The farmer field schools programme launched jointly with FAO in Angola in 2006 has grown continuously in the last decade and a half, to the point that it is now a vital support for the National Development Plan. The intention is to expand the programme from its current 100 000 participants to 1 million, using the HIH Initiative to guide development of a multidimensional national programme.

8. Work on the collection of data for the stochastic profitability frontier analysis is progressing and will generate the typologies to sharpen the sectoral and commodity focus of the production upgrading. This work will be supported by additional analyses to identify opportunities for both specialization and mid-value chain development for the national and, where possible, international markets in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. The work of FAO on the HIH Initiative-supported programme is funded by Angola's first-ever agriculture-oriented unilateral trust fund (UTF) agreement.

### *B. Bangladesh*

9. Despite recent setbacks due to COVID-19, Bangladesh is on track to reaching middle-income status, spurred by an average 6.5 percent economic growth over the past decade. This success, in turn, has created considerable opportunities. With rapid urbanization and fast income growth, dietary patterns are changing, with the demand for fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs, and fish expected to expand by more than 50 percent by 2030.

10. Domestic production, however, faces challenges in meeting growing demand for higher-value commodities, which has resulted in a three-fold increase of food imports (2007 to 2017) to USD 10.7 billion. There is also a challenge of over-production of perishable goods at peak moments, which is leading to a growing consideration of export markets, value addition (One Country, One Priority Product, OCOP) and agri-processing opportunities. Crop diversification is also strongly linked with the growth of livestock and fish sectors because of the required supplementary feed, which is manufactured locally based on a mixture of locally grown and imported raw maize and soybeans.

11. The country has identified six hotspots, which it defines as "a place of significant activity or danger." These are areas where similar hydrological, climate change and environmental weaknesses converge. Through the typology development, which is almost complete and will soon be presented to the government, HIH takes these hotspots into consideration and goes beyond environmental conditions by integrating socioeconomic realities into its analysis.

12. Moving forward, the HIH Initiative is becoming a key support for the government's priority Agriculture Transformation Program (ATP). The key findings of the HIH Initiative, such as typologies, location optimization, and geospatial planning, will be used to design and locate the interventions to be implemented under the ATP. The ATP is intended to drive the modernisation of the agriculture sector through interventions that will include value chain improvement and development, promotion of export-oriented agricultural production, mechanization, agro-processing, climate change – resilience agriculture/agro ecology and climate finance, digital transformation in agriculture, women and youth agricultural leadership and entrepreneurship, private sector and supply chain improvements, and commodity diversification.

13. The ATP will also be supported by programme investment analysis provided under the aegis of the HIH Initiative. While a USD 500 million commitment has already been made by the World Bank, additional talks are ongoing with partners such as the Netherlands, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Asian Development Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, and CGIAR amongst others. The government has set a minimum target of USD 3 billion for the overall programme.

14. The ATP is being coordinated by the Local Consultative Group on Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development, which is co-chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO, and within the sub-working group on ATP, which is co-chaired by FAO and includes the World Bank as an active partner.

### *C. Bhutan*

15. Bhutan's engagement with the HIH Initiative began in June 2021 when FAO, under the umbrella of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP)'s Regional Multidisciplinary Priority Initiatives on HIH, organized jointly with the Royal Government of Bhutan (June 2021) an inception workshop in support of achieving SDGs 1 and 2. At this event, the government requested a fast-track process with joint administration and designated high-level focal points as a signal of its intention to move quickly to consolidate an action plan. Progress has been rapid since then.

16. Currently, a joint steering committee and a task force for the HIH Initiative have been established, consisting of members from various ministries and government agencies supported by several units from FAO. The steering committee reports to the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) and Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (MOAF). The inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral governance structure was endorsed by the government during the introductory workshop headed by the Minister of Agriculture and Forests in August 2021. There are currently monthly task force and steering committee meetings with several technical consultations (stocktaking, priority setting, etc) on-going or planned in the HIH Initiative Bhutan Roadmap and work plan.

17. Four thematic areas have been prioritized by the joint steering committee: (1) enterprise development and marketing; (2) climate-smart agriculture and sustainable farming; (3) food security and nutrition; and (4) Geographic Information Systems (GIS) platforms and digitalization of farming. Baseline studies will soon be underway to identify key constraints, priorities and major opportunities within the context of the thematic areas to better define an integrated approach and interventions for agri-food systems transformation. The typology development has been initiated and is being coordinated with the national task force with its focal point from the Ministry of Agriculture.

18. The HIH Initiative Bhutan also aligns with the complementary components of the hydrological assessments in the Global Climate Fund (GCF) Bhutan project. The government has indicated clear interest in aligning OCOP initiative, which focuses on enhancing value addition to export commodities, with the HIH Initiative. It also seeks improved capacities for data collection and assessment, especially poverty and hunger mapping. HIH Initiative typologies and other analytical tools will be used to identify entry points for the HIH Initiative-supported national programme in Bhutan.

### *D. Burkina Faso*

19. Burkina Faso has provided important lessons in the presentation and development of the HIH Initiative, and highlighted the importance of ensuring national ownership from the beginning through the establishment of joint governance and clear communication of the Initiative as offering state-of-the-art means of supporting national programmes through data and analysis, policy support, multidimensional and multi-stakeholder partners, and assistance in mobilizing finance and investment. This is to say, HIH Initiative is not a programme delivered by FAO, but rather than a way to reinforce and scale up national initiatives and programmes.

20. The government and FAO agreed to form a joint multi-actor task force. To ensure greater national ownership of the Initiative, exchange and information meetings were organized with all stakeholders to present it to them and solicit their participation and create partnerships around food security and nutrition. In order to better support implementation, a national facilitator and focal point was recruited by the government, with technical assistance from FAO.

21. With this reset, several actions have been taken to accelerate development of a national programme, supported by the Initiative. These include:

- a) the development of a concept note to frame the process of developing the HIH Initiative-supported Burkina Faso programme;
- b) conclusion of a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) agreement of USD 500 000;
- c) official launch of the HIH Initiative;

- d) holding of two joint meetings of the task force;
- e) identification and selection of intervention regions for the programme on the basis of the study on the typology of regions and value chains to be promoted (rice, peanuts, sesame, beef sector, NTFPs<sup>1</sup> and aquaculture); and
- f) recruitment of two national consultants to conduct studies on policy and financial measures to support value chain upgrading and an international consultant for the development of the investment plan.

22. A new TCP results framework was agreed in June 2021 to guide action in support of the agreed plan of work. To strengthen ownership, recommendations have been formulated to ensure consistency between the actions identified in the new results framework and the National Rural Sector Programme III (PNSR III), a comprehensive national framework for agro-sylvo-pastoral production and for improving environment, water and sanitation. This has helped to accelerate joint work in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the HIH Initiative in alignment with the PNSR III.

23. The territorial emphasis and differentiation strategy supported by the HIH Initiative is a natural complement to the programmatic emphasis on variation at the regional level under the PNSR III. This variation at the regional level allows each region to see in which agro-sylvo-pastoral sector it is necessary to invest more in order to create growth, increase production and improve the living conditions of producers.

### *E. Ecuador*

24. Ecuador joined the HIH Initiative in June 2020, with an initial focal point in the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG). Specifically, support from the Initiative is framed in the context of the National Agricultural Plan (NAP) 2020-2030, developed by the previous MAG administration. Following the change of government that took place recently, the NAP 2030 is currently under review by the new MAG authorities.

25. HIH Initiative tools and methodologies have been incorporated to support the planning of the new administration. In this regard, meetings have already been held at the political and technical level with the new authorities of MAG. Currently, four provinces have been prioritised at the national level: Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Chimborazo and Manabí, and it has been agreed that MAG will continue with the next step, which is the elaboration of the investment plan.

26. To promote engagement of international financial institutions (IFIs), a roundtable discussion with potential financing partner institutions was organized to introduce insights gained from the Initiative, and bilateral meetings have been conducted with USAID, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF). This country effort already has been supported since 7 May 2021 by the TCP.

27. In relation to the investment plan in selected territories, working meetings have been held between FAO and MAG authorities to validate the prioritised pilot territories and the value chains on which the respective investment plans will be drawn up. In addition, MAG is in the process of identifying the lines of intervention so that FAO can provide direct support with the preparation of investment plans. A potential collaboration between FAO, MAG and IFAD has been identified. In addition, the FAO Office in Ecuador has made available the study of the General Equilibrium Model developed by the Agrifood Economics Division (ESA), as a technical input to support the ongoing conversations between MAG and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. In this sense, through the investment plan, the HIH Initiative is expected to be a key support to implement the national agricultural policy and the investment programmes to be executed at national and territorial level. These programmes are aimed at reducing rural poverty and promoting agricultural employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Non-timber forest products

28. Dialogue with the private sector continues to progress, with a joint trial presentation of new investment analyses to an interested company. In November 2021, there will be an investment event with the presence of the President of Ecuador. The FAO Chief Economist has been requested to participate.

#### *F. El Salvador*

29. The initiative in El Salvador follows two parallel lines. The first is mainly linked to the national RECLIMA programme developed with FAO assistance under GCF. RECLIMA's primary objective is to strengthen the resilience of farmers to climate change, but also presents an opportunity to support additional economic and social objectives through the application of HIH Initiative supports. RECLIMA works with 114 municipalities selected through multi-criteria decision analysis and, from September 2021, participatory territorial diagnoses are being carried out to obtain information for local investment plans. The FAO Investment Centre, as part of the HIH Initiative engagement, will support this process, feeding into the delineation and realization of the investment plans.

30. In addition, efforts are being made to support the Ministry of Agriculture for realization of the Agricultural Rescue Master Plan, which has a fully HIH Initiative compatible approach and would benefit from HIH Initiative support. As a complement to these efforts, the FAO country team has been put in place to assist in the development of a water governance law.

31. Collecting the necessary data for the stochastic profitability frontier analysis took several months but has now been completed with the support of the government. The resulting typology maps have recently been validated by the country office. The FAO Representative is expected to continue with the identification of prioritised territories and the development of investment plans at the territorial level both within and beyond the RECLIMA areas. The presentation to the government will take place in October 2021.

#### *G. Eritrea*

32. Following an exchange of letters between the Minister of Agriculture of the Government of the State of Eritrea and the Director-General of FAO in the first quarter of 2021, Eritrea has moved quickly to establish joint governance arrangements to guide national programme development for agricultural transformation and sustainable rural development.

33. The government first nominated and presented its official task force team to FAO. This was followed by a briefing session, led by the Chief Economist, presenting the HIH Initiative to the Minister of Agriculture, H.E. Mr Arefaine Berhe, and his team. On 19 August 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture and the FAO Office in Eritrea jointly organized an initial consultative workshop on the Initiative. Participating experts and focal persons of the national task force included both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Marine Resources. Mr Semere Amlesom, Adviser to the Minister of Agriculture, designated lead for the initiative in Eritrea, chaired the workshop. This workshop introduced the concept of the HIH Initiative to the broader national task force and began the process of developing priorities and a high-level roadmap for the development of the Eritrean programme.

34. Initial priority areas include value chain development, scaling up intervention of the Minimum Integrated Agricultural Household Package (MIHAP), strengthening GIS department and the National Animal and Plant Health Laboratory (NAPHL) among others. These initial priority areas would be expanded following further technical analysis and consultation. TCP financial resources will be provided to support the match-making process. Technical assistance and support by FAO are requested for geospatial data support, value chain development and formulation of the investment plan.

#### *H. Ethiopia*

35. The HIH Initiative in Ethiopia seeks to accelerate agricultural transformation and rural development, building on existing work with the government and its partners to support development and implementation of the Integrated Agro-Industrial Park policy. HIH Initiative support is first developing value chain studies and subsequently investment analyses and plans to guide public and

private development partner investments into production, aggregation, value-addition and commercialization, specifically through the Agro-Commodity Procurement Zones (ACPZs) surrounding the parks.

36. In this context, and in line with the request from the government, HIH Initiative continues to support the implementation of the ACPZ Investment Plans, by:

- a) aligning partners around solving specific value chain bottlenecks;
- b) strengthening the institutional environment to improve coordination and accelerate implementation of the ACPZs related initiatives;
- c) ensuring inclusion of the poorest farmers and other vulnerable groups into value chain development and related income generation activities; and
- d) mobilizing partnerships for investment.

37. The HIH Initiative thus provides (i) a platform for stakeholders to align and work together to overcome coordination and value chain bottlenecks within the ACPZs and (ii) a strengthened analytical base to better understand the poverty and territorial dynamics of ACPZs and identify concrete cases for further investments, as well as ensuring linkages with other related policies and programmes.

38. Currently, the HIH Initiative is supporting the Ministry of Agriculture, and, in particular, the regional governments of Oromia, Sidama and SNNP<sup>2</sup>, with a TCP of USD 500 000. Several analytical products to support evidence-based decision making are under development, including a quantitative poverty profile of the agricultural sector; a poverty, food security and nutrition quantitative baseline and a qualitative territorial assessment in the ACPZs targeted by the TCP; a mapping of agro-processing infrastructure; a mapping of on-going interventions and investments, along with their implementation partners; an agricultural typology of micro-regions to support the future scaling up of interventions; carbon emissions analysis of proposed investments; return on investment (ROI) analysis for specific business cases identified within the key value chains, amongst others. All of these products will inform the further improvement of the ACPZ Investment Plans and ensure that the required resources are mobilized in a manner that promotes inclusion and sustainability.

39. The ACPZ Investment Plans estimated public investment costs of USD 680 million over five years, the main ticket items being small- and medium-scale irrigation; agro-infrastructure; credit lines for access to finance; and post-harvest and storage infrastructure. USD 370 million were mobilized by 2019; and a further USD 342 million by 2021. About 75 percent of additionally mobilized financing is outside of the scope of the Investment Plans, and relates to industrial investments or large scale irrigation schemes. Significant private sector investments, in particular towards animal feed, dairy and specialty coffee are needed and will be supported under the HIH Initiative.

40. Partnerships are fundamental to the achievement of the Investment Plans. The most recent HIH Initiative partner to come on board is Digital Green, a platform for disseminating agricultural knowledge to farmers. Another important partner is the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), which has produced several studies on the transformation of the sector, and has been the nodal government agency supporting the implementation of the Agricultural Commercialization Cluster Programme (ACC).

### *I. Guatemala*

41. In Guatemala, the government's official expression of interest in April 2021 reaffirmed the existing collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) and FAO, and led to the designation of two government focal points that became part of the joint technical teams of the Initiative. The latter are working in three main areas:

- a) identification of strategic interventions Polochic-Adyacencia;

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<sup>2</sup> the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State



- b) territorial ranking (prioritization of territories) at the national level; and
- c) support for the mapping of strategic players.

A jointly agreed technical note establishes the timetable for action in 2021-2022.

42. The HIH Initiative-supported work is motivated by two concerns: first, to address an urgent request expressed by the government through the Cabinet for Integrated Rural Development (GDRI) to assist with recovery and resilience-building in the territories of Polochic and Adyacencia in the wake of past tropical depressions; and second, as requested by MAGA in its capacity as coordinator of the GDRI, to provide additional territorial analysis, so that the design of the interventions in Polochic-Adyacencia advances in parallel with the development of the typology of micro-regions, guiding strategic investments in the medium and long term. Two joint multidisciplinary groups have been formed to support this work.

43. So far, the following key advances have been achieved:

- a) TCP supporting the initiative has been used to hire a qualified senior national consultant to expedite the process and to foster accelerated joint FAO-government work.
- b) Progress has been made in collecting updated statistical and geographical data for the analysis of stochastic frontiers and the typology of micro-regions, which allows the ranking of territories at the national level. A first prioritized territory has been agreed in the Polochic Valley and Adyacencia area, in accordance with the post-tropical depressions policy approach agreed following the presidential commitment.
- c) Mapping of territorial players is being developed with the support of the Polytechnic University of Madrid. The national cooperation database of the Secretariat for Food Security and Nutrition has been provided.
- d) The concept note of a plan for the prioritization of rural investment in Guatemala 2022-2032 has been elaborated with the assistance of the FAO HIH Initiative.
- e) An official request has been received from MAGA to support the planning and programming of investments of the Irrigation Promotion Policy 2023-2032 (additional FAO Investment Centre resources of USD 178 000).
- f) An agreement has been established with the leading coffee producer's organization, ANACAFÉ, to support 11 000 farmers in improving productivity, innovation, quality and marketing.

### *J. Mali*

44. The HIH Initiative started in December 2020 with a decision of the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery to lead the process, establishing a steering committee and technical committee and naming a focal point for the government. The Initiative was officially launched in February 2021 under the auspices of the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and acknowledged by the UN Country Representative. At the request of the Government, the HIH Initiative will support the operationalization of the government programme on the special agro-industrial transformation zones (Agropoles).

45. During the following months, the HIH Initiative supported delivery of several analytical products to support evidence-based decision-making, including the analysis of agricultural public expenditure (with MAFAP<sup>3</sup>), the synthesis of the relevant national policies and strategies in the agri-food sectors, and the preparation of the agricultural typologies using the stochastic profitability frontier analysis methodology.

46. The agricultural typologies were presented and discussed with the government and key stakeholders through cross-sectoral consultations at regional (three workshops in Koulikoro, Sikasso and Segou in June 2021) and national levels (Bamako, July 2021). These consultations involved technical and financial partners, FAO country office and the cross-organizational HIH Initiative task

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<sup>3</sup> [Monitoring and Analysing Food and Agricultural Policies](#)

team for Mali. An initial donor mapping, which includes development of a comprehensive database and the maps showing the geographical presence of various donors among the country, was completed. The donor mapping demonstrated large overlaps with the areas identified as hotspots for HIH Initiative intervention in the country.

47. Following the discussions with government and stakeholders, it was concluded that the HIH Initiative could support the Agropoles programme by strengthening agro-entrepreneurship and through special programmes focused on increasing the competitiveness of women and youth, and by ensuring their access to the Agropoles; adoption of agro-ecological practices to promote transition to sustainable agriculture and strengthen resilience to climate change; and engaging and strengthening capacities of local governments for fostering inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable, and thus contributing to the stabilisation and peace-building efforts.

48. The HIH Initiative draft programme supports the country's Strategy for Economic Acceleration and Sustainable Development (CREDD II, 2019-2023) and the National Agricultural Investment Plan. Both the Strategy and the Investment Plan support the establishment of Agropoles as a way to attract private investment and promote agricultural transformation by strengthening processing, competitiveness, and access to markets. The Agropoles are also expected to improve the incomes of small producers as well as small and medium service providers supporting on- and off-farm activities in the rural and semi-urban areas. Improved incomes and diversified production is also expected to ensure their access to healthy diets.

49. By promoting value-added activities and mechanization in the processing areas, the Strategy and Investment Plan also provide opportunities for spill over effects into other economic sectors, through light industrialization and the introduction of new, diversified agri-food products for new markets. To advance this process, FAO is currently mobilizing international and national experts for territorial-level economic and financial analysis, and assessment of opportunities for highest return on investments, territorial governance assessment, and study of opportunities for agro-ecological transition and resilience to climate change. The findings of the analyses will inform development of a detailed multi-year programme to be supported by the HIH Initiative, and assess its financial and investment requirements and opportunities.

50. A key feature of the HIH Initiative process in Mali has been the insistence that FAO conducts technical analyses with, rather than for, the government. On 5 July 2021, an online training was offered for selected government officials (also including other francophone HIH Initiative countries) on the basic concepts of GIS and CKAN (an open source data management application used by governments around the world), and the breadth of their application in agri-food sectors, as well as other pertinent software tools and geomatics techniques.

51. A meeting of the multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral steering committee for HIH Initiative was scheduled for end September 2021. The steering committee is called to validate the selection of target regions (Koulikoro and Kayes), and review and endorse the draft programme concept note and action plan for the HIH Initiative-supported programme.

52. The executive roundtables initially planned in December will, most probably, be rescheduled for early 2022 due to the challenging and evolving security and humanitarian situation in the country.

### *K. Nepal*

53. Since June 2021, the FAO Office in Nepal has been working on a Climate Smart Agriculture Investment Plan (CSAIP) with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MOALD) and the World Bank as an important umbrella for joint work supported by the HIH Initiative. The CSAIP provides a framework to move forward on investments for inclusive, productive, and sustainable climate resilient agriculture. The CSAIP was developed by an FAO technical team, also linking to preparation of a GCF-funded climate-resilient agriculture project

54. CSAIP was validated by the government in March 2021, and launched by the Ministry in July. An initial presentation was made to the donors group. CSAIP has a focus on four provinces and related basins to capture the country's diversity and challenges to show applicability of investment

options across the country. Each proposed investment package has been filtered and elaborated based on the contribution to key country policy goals for agriculture, climate change and the SDGs, with indicative costs and benefits by subsector, agroecological zone and province provided. A key element of the study is how the CSAIP would be rolled out, with local governments considering it into their local plans and investments. CSAIP is thus an important rationale and impetus for further honing of HII Initiative key territorial strategies and investments, including supporting GCF project scaling-up, upcoming World Bank project priorities, and assisting other partners in their financing strategy.

55. To support other ongoing mapping activities underway, including a more refined-scale mapping of the stochastic profitability frontier analysis and poverty and food security mapping, the FAO Office in Nepal and its global HII Initiative task team are preparing for a wider stakeholder and provincial level meetings on CSAIP and its roll out, expected in September-October 2021, with further roundtable and matchmaking discussions. The publication of CSAIP study is being prepared with news articles to raise its profile and generate partner interest.

### *L. Nigeria*

56. Nigeria, a large country with a heterogeneous population, significant numbers of poor people, areas of high insecurity, highly varied topography and a constitutional commitment to decentralization presents a large number of complex challenges – but also important opportunities for demonstrating, in diverse different contexts, how the HII Initiative approach can be used to accelerate progress to achieve SDGs 1, 2, and 10.

57. On 7 October 2020, the Federal Government of Nigeria expressed interest to participate in the HII Initiative. From the very beginning, it was agreed that the HII Initiative would be organized as the work of joint teams in every phase of the work. This confirmed government ownership and commitment, and ensured that all technical activities would be viewed as opportunities for shared learning-by-doing.

58. Matching the HII Initiative decision-making processes to the realities of the decentralized structure of governance in Nigeria proved slightly more challenging. Fortunately, the matter was effectively addressed during a high-level Government-FAO roundtable in June 2021, where the HII Initiative was presented to stakeholders, including both federal-level Cabinet Ministers and State Governors and heads of national agencies, as well as the UN Country Team, resident IFIs and other key development partners in agri-food systems transformation. Government officials agreed that the HII Initiative-support should be organized on a territorial basis, corresponding to the joint agreement of the federal and state officials.

59. An inter-ministerial task team composed of mid- to senior-level government officials was established to drive the process at agency levels and contribute to discussions on key government priorities and plans. The proposed institutional set up for the HII Initiative in Nigeria comprises of a national steering committee (NSC), including both state and federal officials, and an inter-ministerial technical task team (TTT). The NSC draws its membership from the Governors Forum, Federal Cabinet, relevant agencies and UN Representation, and provides high level political leadership, strategic guidance, integrated governance, and overall alignment with national, state, and local priorities. Supported by a core team of FAO experts, the inter-ministerial technical task team is responsible for the formulation of a coherent national HII Initiative-supported programme architecture and leads the planning of activities, work plan preparation, programme implementation, progress monitoring and, where necessary, identification of corrective measures to overcome operational constraints.

60. Following preliminary discussions, initial analysis and feedback from two high-level consultations, the government and stakeholders agreed to shape the HII Initiative-supported programme with a twin-track approach:

- a) The first track will support programme investment plans in territories facing emergency threats and shocks in the North-East, North-West and North-Central States. On this track, collaboration on emergencies, resilience and social protection will be streamlined. The

HIH Initiative will adopt a context-specific, multi-hazard, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach developing programme investment plans while taking full advantage of FAO's Nigeria Resilience Strategy 2021-2023.

- b) The second track consists of putting in place interventions, investments and policies that will support agriculture commodity value-chain development, including agro-processing units, in regions with high potential where poverty rates are also high. Technical analysis will inform assessments for dairy products, horticulture, fisheries and possibly other subsectors and set the ground for leveraging development opportunities in agri-food systems.

61. Efforts to identify commodity value chains with possibilities to reduce food loss and waste are also among the priority areas to explore and propose solutions. Efforts to alleviate constraints that hinder intraregional trade of key agricultural inputs (i.e. fertilizers) and commodities are also to be explored. Finally, environmental sustainability challenges will be accommodated throughout the HIH Initiative-supported Nigeria Programme development and implementation, while linkages with Africa's Great Green Wall initiative are also to be explored.

62. Guided by these indicative entry points, territorial typologies have been proposed and donor mapping has been finalised to support matchmaking and executive roundtables. To refine the entry points and formulate the programme architecture for the Nigeria HIH Initiative, the task team has proposed a retreat to be facilitated by an experienced professional service provider. The outcome of this retreat, which has been planned for October 2021, will be utilised in formulating the programme plan. The final draft of the programme plan is foreseen to be ready by November 2021. Additional support in the form of consultants for investment analysis is being mobilized and will provide a synthetic investment overview for potential public and private investment partners.

### *M. Solomon Islands*

63. With funding from IFAD, and operating under the aegis of the HIH Initiative, FAO has prepared the first-ever ten-year Agriculture Sector Growth and Investment Plan (ASGIP) to spur economic development, enhance food security and nutrition, and reduce poverty. The Plan builds on advanced analysis of poverty and food security and nutrition status of the population, as well as climate-impact vulnerability assessment, and identifies agriculture opportunity areas and options to improve rural livelihoods, socio-economic performance, and resilience.

64. The Plan formulates four key programme components:

- a) Governance, Management and Innovation.
- b) National Food and Nutrition Security.
- c) National Livestock Development Program.
- d) National Crop Development.

65. The ASGIP supports disaster preparedness and recovery and transition to sustainable food-systems, addresses the specific needs of women and youth, and promotes traditional food crops and small livestock to address malnutrition. The ASGIP has been formulated in the context of the National Development Strategy and its respective Medium-Term Development Plan. Downstream it will serve to provide overarching context for provincial investment plans and special agriculture programmes and projects funded through the government and development partners.

66. The ASGIP implementation is expected to deliver the following results:

- i. Increased agriculture sector contribution to GDP.
- ii. Increased self-sufficiency through local food supply chains.
- iii. Decreased levels of people living below the poverty line.
- iv. Decreased levels of stunting in children under five.
- v. Increased agricultural productivity and value addition.
- vi. Increased profitability for the farming community.

### *N. Sudan*

67. Sudan formally requested support under the Initiative in the summer of 2021. Following guidance from the Prime Minister, a key objective of the supported programme is to establish an agriculture transformation agency as a nodal entity to support national programmes to accelerate progress toward inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems development and rural transformation. The official name of the agency will be Agriculture and Livestock Transformation Agency (ALTA).

68. A technical task force has been organized with participation of government's technical focal points. The FAO support team, led by FAO Director for Innovation, is consulting with different ministries and has identified a first set of thematic entry points. These include: livestock sector development that would feature slaughterhouses and processing facilities for sheep, meat and dairy products, but also support services such as extension and vaccination programmes). In the crop sector, priorities include value chain development (sorghum, groundnuts), distribution of seeds, water management and irrigation, financial services as well as innovative practices for energy generation (i.e. solar infrastructure).

69. Support from HIH Geospatial Platform is ongoing and an initial set of multi-criteria decision analyses have been conducted to identify possible locations for interventions. FAO is supporting the programme with additional data collection and analysis to improve precision of interventions. Economic, financial and social return analysis of interventions in discussion will also be underway soon. HIH Initiative in Sudan operates with support from the FAO Office in Sudan, the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa and FAO Headquarters without TCP funding.

70. HIH Initiative will support ALTA establishment with analyses, training, recruitment, etc., but also, as indicated above, in supporting national programme development and implementation based on country priorities. Territorial analysis/GIS data are foundational for the initial set of activities within the context of operationalizing ALTA. The adaptation of Ethiopia's experience provides an important example of knowledge sharing and learning in the context of the HIH Initiative. The ALTA team has already developed a results framework and a roadmap for the HIH Initiative team in Sudan.

### *O. Tajikistan*

71. In Tajikistan, the initial request for support from the HIH Initiative coincided with the government's commissioning of FAO to implement the European Union (EU)-funded project "Strengthening Institutions and Capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and State Veterinary Inspection Service (SVIS) for Policy Formulation" (GCP/TAJ/013/EC), which aims to assist the government in supporting the Agrarian Reform Programme 2012-2020 by addressing restructuring and capacity development in MoA and SVIS. Specifically, the government requested FAO to develop a national investment plan for the agriculture sector. The requested plan would map priority issues and investments needed for the sector, and thus ensure effective use of limited resources and attract financing and investments.

72. At the request of MoA, the plan was developed between June and December 2020 using the HIH Initiative approach and benefiting from its resources, in particular the use of advanced GIS information and data to improve identification of territories where investments would generate the greatest economic and social payoffs, and matchmaking efforts to bring potential public and private investors and significant donors to make complementary investments and contributions.

73. The FAO Investment Centre took the lead in mobilizing an array of experts from across FAO and beyond. The resulting *National Investment Plan for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (NIP) 2021-2030* for the Republic of Tajikistan is a ten-year plan of investment interventions supporting the country's long-term sustainable agriculture sector development backed by a number of policy and strategy documents, as well as seven specific project notes providing detailed analysis of potential investments to address sectoral and sub-sectoral issues described in the Plan.

74. While the National Investment Plan provides the overall vision of the country's short- and longer-term development, the application of HIH Initiative methods opens the way for a territorial

approach to implementation of the plan and a matchmaking approach to the identification and recruitment of diverse development partners within a nationally owned and led programme of activities.

75. A key innovation of the Tajikistan programme support has been the application of geospatial techniques to analyse the country's current agriculture sector performance and existing main issues and to improve location-specific multi-criteria decision analysis. Faced with a dearth of georeferenced agricultural data and a short time to project completion, the team improvised drawing upon the technical resources of the Geospatial Platform, FAO Data Lab, partner Google Earth and close stakeholder consultation to create Tajikistan's geospatial analytical portal, the "NIP Atlas" (accessible in both Russian and English).

76. HIH Initiative support continues following the completion of Tajikistan's NIP, and is focused particularly on mobilizing support for the dairy sector, which has been identified as one with the greatest potential to improve the incomes and nutrition of the poorest while also generating important new opportunities for value chain development. FAO's matchmaking has contributed to decisions by the World Bank and IFAD for financing two projects identified in the NIP.

### *P. Yemen*

77. Jointly with the World Bank in May 2021, FAO, UNDP and WFP mobilized a comprehensive USD 127 million project, including Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) funding that supports the poverty reduction and food security improvement objectives of the HIH Initiative. Specifically, the project aims to provide nutritious food products and support livelihoods restoration (nutritious sensitive value chains: crops, livestock and fisheries).

78. The dedicated TCP (TCP/YEM/3802) is progressing and is proving to be instrumental to support the process. Key outputs include evidence generation, stakeholder engagement, planning (National Agriculture Strategy, NAS 2030 and National Agriculture Investment Plan, NAIP 2025) and capacity development to government entities.

79. Preparation of investment-oriented diagnostics started in January 2021 and is ongoing, with initial drafts completed for review in September. A multidisciplinary team has been established with more than 20 national and international experts. The diagnostics are at advanced stage and ready for in-country technical validation.

80. Data collection and analysis has been challenging in the context of severe conflict, a global pandemic and socio-economic and environmental shock. Under the HIH Initiative, the FAO Office in Yemen has received strong support from the FAO Geospatial Platform team, ESA and FAO Data Lab (March-June 2021) to address these gaps. Effective joint (interdivisional) work was undertaken to map poverty, welfare, and potentials for agri-food value chains. An important innovation introduced by the technical team has been a new generation of "maps of suffering" to capture the full impacts of war, economic disruption, and environmental and climate shocks.

81. A results architecture has been drafted for the emerging HIH Initiative-supported programme, including an indicative five-component structure. A joint FAO-International Finance Corporation (IFC) work has started, with an in-depth analysis of the coffee and fisheries value chains. The output will comprise a joint FAO-IFC publication, scoping private sector and missing middle investment potential. The result will further guide blended financing support on the two mentioned value chains. Work is continuing to gather more granular data and draw pertinent lessons from development/emergency projects/investment being implemented in the country.

### **III. Two lessons learned from early country experiences**

82. Because the Initiative seeks to drive investment in agri-food systems and rural transformation to higher levels of technical competence, coherence, scale and ambition, it is only natural that FAO Members and their development partners, including donors, IFIs, large and small private enterprises and investors, sister UN entities, research and technical partners, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs), should need a clear understanding of what the HIH

Initiative purports to be and do. While the HIH Initiative remains very much work in progress, two fundamental lessons have already become clear and can be expressed in terms of two principles:

*A. The HIH Initiative is not a programme, but a distinctive new way of supporting nationally owned and led programmes for agricultural and rural transformation.*

83. The HIH Initiative is not a programme to be exported to countries, but offers a series of supports that are designed to ensure that national and international programme, policy and investment decision-making are founded on the strongest available science and country-specific evidence; fully achieve the potential of both traditional and non-traditional development partners to work together to mobilise means of implementation and accelerate achievement of national priorities for the SDGs, adhering to established international norms and standards; promote and facilitate scaled-up public and private investment as essential drivers of transformative change; and provide an enabling environment, including state of the art monitoring and evaluation systems, to sustain collaborative action over time.

84. As it is clear from the case studies, HIH Initiative-supported programmes are seldom new programmes. Most, in fact, have a history and in many cases the role of FAO and key supporters predates the launch of the HIH Initiative. Yet, as the case studies also indicate, the HIH Initiative adds significant value even where a programme is well established and funded. It provides access to a wealth of data that is of higher quality, lower cost, georeferenced and able to be combined easily and efficiently – data that can be updated with greater frequency than in the past. It offers a growing set of tools and analytical methods that sharpen analysis, improve programme targeting, and enable near real-time assessment of potential and actual impacts of interventions or events. And it also introduces methods and mechanisms to tackle many of the most difficult coordination challenges of sustainable development: building and sustaining multi-stakeholders and cross-sectoral coalitions; ensuring alignment with UN norms, standards and principles; identifying and enabling better management of trade-offs among alternative policy interventions; and strengthening national capacities for complex programme management.

85. The programmes that the HIH Initiative supports are not FAO programmes, nor programmes of donors, investors, the United Nations or any of the other important development partners. Each may contribute to an essential or even indispensable component to the overall programme, but the import of programme is always the national government. Much energy has been spent in unnecessary disputes over programme ownership and identity, of who works for whom. A simple principle works best: the programme is the government's programme. FAO works with the government to put in place a real-time performance monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to ensure high levels of transparency, information-sharing, communications and mutual accountability among the partners. The M&E system, like all HIH Initiative products, is designed to be fully owned and, sooner rather than later, fully controlled by the programme country.

*B. National Ownership is not a posture, but a principle and a practice that needs to be recognized and enacted from the beginning.*

86. A second critical lesson from the case studies is that the programmes work best when national ownership is built in from the beginning. This can be accomplished in many ways. Programme governance, for example, supports ownership when it is joint and practiced daily. In the cases of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nigeria, reported here, to a varying degree in many other cases, steering and technical committees are fully joint, improving transparency, accelerating mutual learning, and simplifying coordination. While decisions are ultimately the purview of the government, the joint structures tend to improve understanding and the quality of decision-making.

87. Experience also teaches that ownership must also extend to technical work. Governments, like most institutions, have little confidence in what they do not understand. Fortunately, the gap in technical understanding has been closing, even in most HIH Initiative countries, and an important objective has been to accelerate technical learning even as we are introducing and developing new technical innovations. Fortunately, FAO has been able to count on voluntary contributions from

several donor countries, such as the Flexible Multi-donor Mechanism project on “Accelerating Innovation through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative” (FMM/GLO/158/MUL) to develop a variety of training seminars and supports that can be delivered remotely to make the technical work of HIH a fully transparent and, in some cases, joint undertaking.

88. As the country cases demonstrate, the HIH Initiative is not designed to solve problems for the beneficiary countries, but to enhance their capacities to identify, analyse and solve a complex array of technical, policy, investment and coordination problems for themselves. The lesson learned so far is that building ownership, capacity and human capital are complementary and mutually reinforcing activities.

#### **IV. Development of a dashboard to ensure the effective delivery, management, governance and impact of the Initiative**

89. A programme dashboard is in the development stage, incorporating baseline indicators, progress towards target outcomes, intervention maps, anchor investment and the diverse contributions of partners and governments from Ethiopia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal, Solomon Islands and Tajikistan. The dashboard builds upon months of painstaking data collection and agricultural typology building, as well as close consultations between host governments and multiple partners, all of which have informed the country’s strategic programme investment plan.

90. The dashboard is designed to provide regular, real-time reporting of progress against programme milestones and SDG objectives, all with visualizations that serve as a guide and touchstone for the government and partners. It also provides key impacts and cost-benefit analysis, showcasing advancement in the areas of interventions.

#### **V. The HIH Initiative as a Programme Priority Area (PPA) in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31**

91. This report has focused principally on actions and outcomes at country level; future reports will need to report on equally important measures and arrangements implemented in the Organization and its institutional relationships to deliver and sustain the Initiative’s enhanced programming support at country level. While it is essential to prioritize the transformation of the country nexus, there are two other vital dimensions of the implementation: one internal to the Organization, covering changes in the capabilities, knowledge production and management, practices, processes, rules and organizational culture; the other reflecting the HIH Initiative’s commitment to a vastly expanded reliance on multi-dimensional partnerships with external entities.

92. To date, the HIH Initiative has largely been developed from the country back across the Organization with claims on human resources addressed from within on an “as needed” basis. This demand-driven approach has been efficient in its own way, working principally with existing corporate resources, mobilizing expertise, know-how and relationships from within, and with identified country needs exercising a kind of discipline on the use of resources by sharpening focus, adding urgency, and stimulating improvisation and innovation. But with coverage now extended to 45 countries, the Initiative still faces some inherent challenges by assumptions, structures, processes, technologies, and perceptions, to the very high efficiency and trust requirements of the HIH Initiative operating at full-scale implementation.

93. Until recently, efficiency in organizational performance at FAO has tended to be equated with cost reduction, that is, for a knowledge-based organization, a reduction in the labour inputs required to produce a given set of outputs. A more capacious concept, adopted in the development of the HIH Initiative, would refer to, in addition to resource efficiency, an increase in the relevance, quality and impact of outputs per given unit of inputs (mostly skilled labour in a knowledge-based organization, but with non-trivial capital consumption in utilization and maintenance of enabling technologies and facilities).

94. The commitment of senior management to dramatically improve organizational efficiency through the HIH Initiative without an increase in regular programme resources is genuine. An early



demonstration of the remarkable gains that can be achieved through changes in organizational alignment, operating structure and culture has been provided by the creation and accelerated development of the HIH Geospatial Platform. During the past two years, following a senior management decision in late 2019 to consolidate and enable access to all FAO-held data through an open platform, technical experts from twenty technical units have been working with the Geospatial Platform team in the Digitalization and Informatics Division (CSI) to catalogue, cleanse, geo-reference, provide metadata according to validated standards, and enable access to a large number of data sets previously held separately by the different technical divisions and by the regional and country offices.

95. Under pressure of the demands of the HIH Initiative, the Geospatial Platform was adapted to serve as an open information-sharing platform providing access to millions of data “layers” that can be combined to enable a new class of multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) tools that are now reshaping FAO’s offer to its Members and other stakeholders as global public goods. These tools include the stochastic profitability frontier analyses that are used to generate typologies for the HIH Initiative, a HIH storage location tool to reduce the impact of aflatoxin blooms, the Crop Water Requirement Tool to combine soil, crop and climate information to estimate water needs in different locations, and new tools for Desert Locust Monitoring, Forecasting and Assessment and for Rift Valley Fever decision support. Partnerships with the European Space Agency, Google Earth Engine, the private firm Atlas AI, the institute for Earth System Science at Tsinghua University, and the Copernicus Climate Change Service (AgERA5) are rapidly increasing both data and data quality available through the platform, but also adding new analytical capabilities. This rapid expansion in capability, reach and technical competency comes not as the result of a massive investment of capital and the use of large pools of dedicated human resources, but as the result of a management decision to redeploy existing resources and proactively seek strategic alliances with world-class research institutions.

96. A similar logic informs the commitment of senior management to support the HIH Initiative without recourse to budgetary resources or large changes to the allocation of resources across units of the Organization. While units of the Organization are now directly involved in programme-support activities under the HIH Initiative, it is a misnomer to describe the application of unit resources as a “contribution” to it. Instead, it is more accurate to describe the HIH Initiative as an intangible change in the Organization’s way of working, offering the participating Centres, Divisions and Offices, as well as units and teams located in Regional, Sub-regional and Country Offices a clear structure and operating code within which they can more effectively combine forces to attain higher scale and impact than each could achieve on their own.

97. The designation of the HIH Initiative as a Programme Priority Area (PPA) under the Strategic Framework 2022-31 provides an institutional framework for a more comprehensive and systematic approach to address existing institutional bottlenecks and develop the set of institutional supports required to unlock the full potential of the Initiative. The PPA core and extended teams are expected to serve as an Organization-wide think tank for developing required institutional capabilities required for each area. In the case of the HIH Initiative, this will extend beyond purely technical concerns to important operational topics.

98. It is expected that the work plan will be built around strengthening the five pillars of the HIH Initiative Framework:

- a) The Geospatial Platform and its associated analytical tools (georeferenced welfare and nutrition analysis, HIH typologies, CDMA tools, etc.).
- b) Integration of all agri-food systems dimensions into differentiated strategies based on geospatial analysis and a territorial approach.
- c) Efficient donor and investor matchmaking, to include GCF and Global Environment Facility (GEF) engagements that adopt “global programme” management approaches similar to the HIH Initiative.

- d) Partnerships engagement with key stakeholders (national producers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), private sector, research institutions, UN agencies, civil society and other non-governmental organizations).
- e) A state-of-the-art M&E system guided by a priority metric, abundant and efficient data collection, systems-enabled information-sharing and transparency, quarterly and annual reviews and (near) real-time impact evaluation.

99. Lead coordination for this broad PPA effort, as well as comprehensive day-to-programme oversight and management for the 45 HIH Initiative-supported countries, will rest with the governance unit under the direct supervision of FAO Chief Economist. The designation of the unit as PPA Lead reflects the underlying nature and intention of the HIH Initiative to provide diverse and integrated means to solve the many coordination problems that threaten all efforts to promote agri-food systems transformation within the demanding framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## **VI. Strengthening the development pillar in the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus**

100. An outstanding challenge, faced repeatedly during the past year is the need to update FAO's development approach to crisis and conflict countries with a view to strengthening the development pillar in the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. Afghanistan, Haiti, all of the Sahel countries, Syria and Yemen have endured extreme economic, environmental, natural, and political and military shocks (in most cases in combination), and with the exception of the latter two countries, progress toward moving beyond emergency response has been elusive. The prevailing situations in Afghanistan, Haiti and in many Sahel countries, although fraught with serious risks, also offer important opportunities to apply HIH Initiative methods and supports, particularly from the technical side, with remote assistance backing up innovative programmes to spur inclusive sustainable and resilient agri-food systems development.