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# COUNCIL

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### Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative

#### Executive summary

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

- a) The ongoing increase in the overall number of HIH countries to 66 as of September 2023, which reflects the global interest and need for larger and ambitious programming for investments and concrete actions to transform agrifood systems, by Members.
- b) The second expanded Hand-in-Hand Initiative Investment Forum planned in October 2023, with 31 member countries to present their investment opportunities to partners and stakeholders including development banks, nonprofit foundations, financial institutions and private sector entities.
- c) The update and progress of HIH Regional Initiatives, namely, the Sahel Regional Initiative and the Dry Corridor Initiative in Central America, which will be presented during the HIH Initiative Investment Forum in October 2023.
- d) Rollout of global-level communications materials, and rollout of the strategy to promote engagement with a diverse range of partners.

This document builds on information provided in previous reports to the Programme Committee and the Council. Additional information on the Initiative and details regarding specific country investment plans are available on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative webpage, on FAO's corporate website, including the Dashboard and the Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform.

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

The Programme Committee is invited to take note of the progress made on the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand Initiative.

In particular, the Committee may wish to:

- a) welcome the continued growth in the number of countries participating in the Initiative, to a total number of 66 countries (as of September 2023);
- b) recognize that all FAO Members may participate in the HIH Initiative, not only as beneficiaries but also as development and/or resource partners;
- c) appreciate that the HIH Initiative offers a platform for improved multisectoral and multistakeholder collaboration and facilitates mobilization of increased and targeted investment to accelerate agrifood systems transformation at national level, in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- d) recognize that the HIH Initiative was selected as a key means of implementation for the High Impact Initiative on Food Systems Transformation<sup>1</sup>, among the 12 high impact initiatives selected by the UN Deputy Secretary-General across UN agencies and key partners;
- e) welcome recent efforts of the HIH Initiative to engage with other initiatives and corporate efforts across the FAO *four betters*, collaborating with a range of Programme Priority Areas (PPAs) such as on Investment and Food Loss and Waste; and
- f) note the increase in demand from 66 member countries for HIH support, use of tools and approaches, and the need for additional technical support for developing and taking investments forward in collaboration with a range of partners.

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

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/Food%20Systems%20Transformation%20Brochure.pdf>

## I. Overview

1. This document provides updates on progress and results achieved in the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative.

2. The Director-General announced the Initiative on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2019. In the following months, the Director-General invited FAO Members that met objective criteria to participate in the Initiative. Members met the criteria if they are Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), or Food Crisis Countries (as defined by the Global Network Against Food Crises), and countries with large poor populations.

3. To date, 66 countries have expressed their desire to participate. Participating countries include:

**Africa** (36): Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

**Asia and the Pacific** (12): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

**Europe** (1): Tajikistan.

**Latin America and the Caribbean** (13): Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru.

**Near East and North Africa** (4): Iraq, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

4. Experience confirms that the HIH Initiative offers FAO Members and their development and investment partners programmatic support and an innovative way of strengthening, expanding and sustaining ambitious national programmes for agrifood systems transformation to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2 and 10.

5. Specifically, the HIH Initiative offers the innovative Geospatial Platform for data and information exchange and analysis. Under the HIH Initiative, national counterparts are supported by FAO technical task teams to apply innovative analytical methods that help identify territories and populations in participating countries where programmes and strategic investments can unlock market-oriented opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth which have the real potential to eradicate poverty, end malnutrition and reduce inequality. A growing number of countries (now four) have also started to use the HIH approach at a local level e.g., provincial level, for improved planning of investments.

6. FAO was recently identified by the UN Deputy Secretary-General as the lead agency for the High Impact Initiative on Food Systems Transformation and has identified HIH as a means of implementation of this ambitious agenda for further encouraging scalable and targeted investments in agrifood systems. This will be implemented in close collaboration with the United Nations Rome-based Agencies, the World Bank and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

7. A second major milestone is planned during the reporting period. The second Hand-in-Hand Initiative Investment Forum (HIH IF 2023) will be held from 17 to 20 October 2023 during the World Food Forum at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, in which 31 countries and two Regional Initiatives<sup>2</sup> are expected to participate and present their Investment Plans, with one Special Event on Haiti also

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fao.org/hand-in-hand/hih-IF-2023/regional-initiative-for-the-dry-corridor/en>  
<https://www.fao.org/hand-in-hand/hih-IF-2023/regional-initiative-for-the-sahel/en>

planned to be held. 17 new countries and 14 returning countries are expected to attend the HIH IF 2023 with around 9 Heads of State/Prime Ministers and more than 30 Ministers expected to attend.

8. Compared to 2022, there is increased interest from a number of investors and private sector entities in the HIH IF 2023, including international financial institutions, regional banks, investment and impact funds and the private sector. There is stronger interest and earlier bookings for HIH matchmaking meetings, using the expanded online app where governments play the leading role.

9. Based on feedback received from partners who attended the HIH Investment Forum in 2022, each participating country was also encouraged to use the FAO EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT) for the formulation of the investment notes. EX-ACT provides its users with a consistent way of estimating and tracking the outcomes of agricultural interventions on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. EX-ACT is the only GHG accounting tool to the entire agricultural sector (agriculture, forestry and other land use – inland and coastal wetlands, fisheries and aquaculture, agricultural inputs and infrastructure (AFOLU)), and is the primary GHG accounting tool for agricultural projects of the World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and used by other financial institutions including the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), national development banks, governments, farmer organizations and private stakeholders.

10. Part B of this document focuses on the participating countries and regions and provides highlights of the major progress delivered in the form of preparations for the country-level investment notes to be presented by Members at the HIH IF 2023. The report is divided by region hereunder, and additional details on country highlights and investment cases will be presented in future reports.

11. Parts C and D of this document refer to the ongoing efforts on monitoring as well as the communications strategy rollout and products developed. More details on each country and the respective government's HIH IF 2023 investment presentations can be accessed on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative [Investment Forum 2023](#) website.

## II. Country Investment Notes

### A. Africa

12. With 36 participating countries, the African region is seeing strong participation and steady progress in HIH.

13. **The Sahel Initiative** was launched at the HIH IF 2022. A side event will be organized on the progress of the Sahel Initiative during the HIH IF 2023. The Sahel Initiative is now firmly owned and led by regional/subregional bodies including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Permanent Interstate Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and key partners, with the technical and policy assistance support of the HIH team and FAO Regional/Subregional Offices. This initiative will build on existing initiatives and on investment gaps identified. A meeting will be convened to provide space for governments, regional and subregional bodies, investment and development partners to examine and highlight their interest to work together in scaling up investments for agrifood systems transformation.

14. In 2022, the Sahel Initiative session identified three Axes of Action: Axis 1: ensuring land and water access, tenure, sustainability and governance; Axis 2: transformation of agrifood production and post-production systems and trade; and Axis 3: building technical and institutional capacities for transformational leadership. During the Investment Forum 2023, significant and scalable investment cases will be presented based on a phased approach. Efforts around this regional initiative are complementary to the ongoing HIH work in individual countries and will also address and support opportunities for enhancing regional and subregional investment and trade.

15. **Angola**: joined HIH in May 2021. As part of its National Development Plan 2023-2027, the Government of Angola identified two key accelerators to harness the country's potential in the production of cereals and livestock in response to the growing demand for food imports, particularly

cereals for human and animal feed and poultry through the National Grain Plan (PLANAGRÃO) and the National Plan for the Promotion and Development of Livestock (PLANAPECUÁRIA). Target locations for investments have been identified utilizing the outputs of the HIH Initiative Geospatial Platform and socioeconomic analysis in areas with high agricultural potential, experiencing high poverty.

16. Angola is planning to participate in HIH IF 2023 and will present interventions for a total estimated value of USD 1.245 billion, aiming at increasing national capacities to produce grains and poultry.

17. **Cameroon:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2020. With the support of the HIH team and based on the HIH tools and analyses, the country is expected to participate for the first time in the IF 2023.

18. In line with Government priorities, the investment plan to be presented will focus on climate smart rice production and combined rice-fish investments for a total value of USD 866 million. Based on the Government's national rice strategy, the investments are designed to reduce the country's import dependency and contribute to poverty alleviation and improve food security.

19. **Congo:** joined HIH in February 2020. The country has ambitious goals to utilize the Initiative to build upon and accelerate relevant existing programmes, develop national capabilities and bolster national ownership of sustainable rural development. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries leads these efforts with the support of the HIH team, contributing to the development and implementation of investment interventions on cassava flour for bread making, soy and maize, poultry farming and irrigation systems.

20. Congo participated in the first HIH IF in 2022 and is expected to participate again in October 2023 to present an investment plan for USD 250 million in the prioritized value chains.

21. **Ethiopia:** joined the HIH in 2020, and presented their priorities for investments at the HIH IF in 2022. From the HIH IF 2022 there are four companies who have expressed initial interest in exploring investment in Ethiopia on farm machinery, irrigation equipment, organic fertilizer, lime, and animal feed production. Potential collaboration with investment companies and private sector alliances have been emerging and will be followed up on.

22. Investment cases to be delivered at the HIH IF 2023 by the Government of Ethiopia will include on (a) Organic Fertilizer and Agricultural Lime, (b) Smallholder Mechanization, and (c) Animal Feed Production for a total estimated investment of USD 528 million.

23. **Guinea:** joined the HIH Initiative in July 2021. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, in coordination with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, are leading the effort, and the HIH team contributes to the development and implementation of investment plans for four value chains following the national priorities.

24. Guinea will participate in the HIH IF 2023. To date, discussions with leading government agencies indicate investments for crops (rice, maize), and livestock value chains (small ruminants and pigs). The Government aims to mobilize investments USD 250 million which include a significant public financial contribution.

25. **Guinea-Bissau:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2021. In line with national priorities, with the support of the HIH team and using the HIH tools and analyses, the Government is planning to present investment proposals on rice value chain development, poultry farming development and onion value chain development for a total value of USD 127 million at the IF 2023.

26. **Kenya:** joined the HIH Initiative in May 2022 at a critical time, when Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) communities were facing a food crisis due to the impact of the drought on livestock. HIH supported the Government on improved geospatial data and tools to optimize investments along their prioritized livestock feed value chain.

27. Kenya is expected to present their investment opportunities at the HIH IF 2023, including growing of pasture for hay making, sunflower for both animal feed and oil, mechanization for hay

making, sunflower oil pressing, feedlots for cattle fattening/ finishing, abattoir operations and digitized livestock traceability system for a total estimated value of USD 164 million.

28. **Malawi:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2020. With support from the HIH team and using the HIH tools and analyses, the Government has developed a series of prioritized and targeted investments.

29. Specifically, the investment plan to be presented at the HIH IF 2023 includes three fish processing facilities and feed mills, the commercialization of banana production, private-led dairy sector development and decentralized rice aggregation and processing centres, for a total value of USD 141 million.

30. **Mali:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2020. Based on the success of the HIH IF 2022, the Government of Mali organized a HIH National Investment Forum in March 2023 with over 200 participants and numerous engagements from public-private partners. The Government of Mali is also examining repurposing of an ongoing World Bank financial support to HIH identified investments.

31. At the HIH IF 2023, the Government of Mali is planning to present their prioritized investment plan linked to government agropole investments supported by several partners for an estimated value of USD 28 million.

32. **Nigeria:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2021. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is leading the effort while an extended steering committee and task force involve other relevant Federal Ministries and Federal State Governments. The HIH Initiative is aligned with national efforts to build resilience and strengthen agricultural development and support the implementation of the National Development Plan 2021-25. Discussions with government agencies indicate needs to support information systems for building resilience (first HIH programme track) while emphasizing the need to further support value chain development for cassava, maize, tomatoes, and dairy as well as water management through irrigation systems utilizing sustainable energy resources (second HIH program track).

33. Nigeria is planning to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and to present their national priorities on information systems to support emergency and resilience aspects as well as technology and knowledge transfer, value chain development, agriculture infrastructure for market access and water management, commodity trade and agricultural inputs, valued at above USD 1.5 billion.

34. **Rwanda** joined the HIH Initiative in 2020. Rwanda is on a transformation path from a low-income to a middle-income country and agriculture remains the backbone for sustained economic growth. The HIH Initiative is one of the country-led initiatives aligned with the Government's strategic frameworks in place to accelerate agricultural transformation.

35. The climate-smart investment cases to be presented by the Government during the IF 2023 include tea, small livestock (piggery and chicken) and potato production. The total investment required is estimated at USD 501.8 million.

36. **South Sudan:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2023. In line with government priorities and linked with the ongoing efforts supported by FAO, priority value chains were identified in specific locations based on the HIH tools and analyses. South Sudan is expected to participate in the IF 2023 and present their investments on sesame, sorghum, fisheries and rice (Aweil scheme).

37. **Togo:** joined HIH Initiative in the spring of 2022. HIH supports the implementation of the Togo 2025 roadmap, which constitutes the leading framework for strategic social and economic development of the country, for which the Agriculture Transformation Agency is the lead partner.

38. Togo is planning to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and to present their investment priorities for three priority value chains: sesame, cashew nuts and cassava for a total value of USD 120 million.

39. **United Republic of Tanzania:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2021 and following extensive engagements with the Government, including a mission to the country by the HIH team, priority value chains and areas for investments were identified.

40. Tanzania is planning to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and present their investment cases for the Presidential Legacy Program; Building a Better Tomorrow (focused on empowering women and youth), and for sunflower oil, wheat and soybean production.
41. There is already interest from a number of investors and partners on the above-mentioned programme as well as the other identified value chains, and a scoping mission from the African Development Bank is planned which will be technically supported by the FAO Investment Centre.
42. **Zimbabwe:** joined the HIH Initiative in January 2021 and participated in the HIH IF 2022. As a result, government-led engagements with potential financiers and donors are ongoing, including the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the European Union. Zimbabwe has mobilized significant support including a USD 20 million programme with AfDB and, more recently, with a large agriculture company regarding agricultural machinery.
43. The Government has engaged with a wide range of development partners through the planning of two National Investment Fora as well as series of meetings with development partners in and outside of the country. The engagement has also led to the launch of a partnership platform for the HIH Initiative to support investment mobilization in Zimbabwe. The HIH Initiative also provided the basis for nine provincial investment plans in the country. Zimbabwe is planning to attend the IF 2023 and to present their investment plan.

### *B. Asia*

44. **Bangladesh:** joined HIH Initiative in August 2020. Bangladesh is perhaps one of the most advanced HIH countries in terms of commitments and private sector engagement. With the HIH Initiative support, USD 543 million from the World Bank/IFAD Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship, and Resilience (PARTNER) was operationalized as part of the government-led Agriculture Transformation Programme. In June 2023, the first Bangladesh Agriculture Investment Forum was organized by the Government, with the support of partners with the aim of increasing targeted investment and access to finance for food producers and agri-processing companies.
45. Bangladesh is planning to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and present their prioritized investments on tomato, pineapple, jackfruit, mango, onion and potato – as well as on climate-smart rice production.
46. **Bhutan:** joined HIH Initiative in June 2021. The Kingdom of Bhutan aims to transform the country's agrifood systems so that it goes from deficit to surplus. The country has focused significantly on strengthening private sector engagement, which included participating in a trade and investment fair in Bangladesh and sending a delegation of private sector representatives to the Bangladesh Agriculture Investment Forum to learn from their experience and strengthen partnership.
47. The following major areas of investment are to be presented by the Kingdom of Bhutan during the HIH IF 2023: citrus mandarin, quinoa, organic asparagus, rainbow trout and black pepper for a total value of USD 73 million.
48. **Cambodia:** The Kingdom of Cambodia joined the HIH Initiative in 2022. In line with governmental priorities, the HIH Initiative supported the development of an investment framework designed to accelerate agrifood systems transformation. Cambodia plans to mobilize investment to strengthen selected value chains for enhancing farming profitability, sustainable agriculture, and environmental protection, in line with the priorities set forth in the recently launched Pentagon Strategy Phase I (2023-2028) of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Investment opportunities that may be presented at HIH IF 2023 include rice, cashews, mangos and aquaculture for a total value of USD 867 million.
49. **Lao People's Democratic Republic:** joined the HIH Initiative in March 2020 with the objective of eradicating hunger and reducing poverty by transforming agrifood systems along the Green Growth Economic Corridor emerging from the newly built railway that connects Lao People's Democratic Republic to China and Thailand. Based on engagements developed during the HIH IF

2022, one company has committed to an investment of USD 5 million in the livestock value chain, two national investment fora were held by the Government, and potential collaboration with an international financial institution for a USD 50 million investment in irrigation and improved water management is ongoing.

50. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry leads the effort and the HIH team contributes to the development and implementation of investment interventions. Lao People's Democratic Republic is planning to return to present new investments at the HIH IF 2023 on cassava, cassava starch, timber, non-timber forest products (cardamom) and organic tea.

51. **Pakistan:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2020. As a precursor to the HIH IF 2023, Pakistan held a national Investment Forum in May 2023, jointly organized with the provincial Investment Authorities, the International Finance Corporation, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank. The event was successful with approximately 350 participants, mainly from private sector entities. Several Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Government (B2G) agreements were signed, and other negotiations are ongoing.

52. Through the initiative, the Government has identified potential investment opportunities in developing commodity clusters. Initially, the focus is on eight commodities— apple, beef, chili, dates, mango, onion, rice and tomato. The Government is planning to present these at the HIH IF 2023.

53. **Vanuatu:** joined the HIH Initiative in April 2022, and the HIH team worked with the Ministries of Agriculture and Trade and Industry in developing targeted investments based on government-identified priorities and commodities. The following investment opportunities are planned to be presented at the HIH IF 2023 by the Government on water taro, cocoa and manioc, for a total of USD 34.3 million.

54. Some indications of interest have already been received for these interventions and are being followed up at national and subregional levels and at the global HIH team level, including possible support through the South-South and Triangular Cooperation and SIDS programmes. Further support is also planned for Vanuatu and the SIDS from the Pacific on human capital development and on the use and application of HIH Geospatial Platform and tools, in collaboration with the FAO Subregional and Regional Offices.

### C. Latin America

55. The **Dry Corridor “Corredor Seco” regional** initiative was launched at the HIH IF 2022 to tackle poverty reduction and food insecurity challenges through a regional approach. Initial support of USD 1 million has been provided by the Government of Brazil towards this approach. In addition, final negotiations for a GCF project with the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEL) are underway. The initiative has been expanded to 13 countries from the region, with the HIH Initiative supporting the Government at the highest level. The Initiative is also strongly involving subregional partners, and it is led by the Central American Integration System (SICA) in collaboration with SIECA (Secretaría de Integración Económica Centroamericana), CCAD (Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo) and CAC (Consejo Agropecuario Centroamericano).

56. The Dry Corridor and Arid Zones of the SICA region cover 35 percent of the surface of Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Panama, in which around 21 million people live in rural municipalities, and 20 percent work in agriculture.

57. Under the leadership of SICA, the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC), the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) and the Central American Economic Integration Secretariat (SIECA), five new investment notes have been prepared: technological innovation in integrated water supply systems; digital soil nutrition mapping; agricultural climate risk zoning and support for the development of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and digital ecosystems for access to markets. The total investment required is currently estimated as USD 300 million which will benefit an estimated 250 000 families. It is planned to present these investments in detail at the HIH IF 2023.



58. The **Panama Food Hub** was launched during the HIH IF 2022. The Panama Canal facilitates several key trading routes between the Americas and the rest of the world. It is of particular importance for global agrifood trade, with soybeans, grains and bananas as major commodity groups traded. The Canal is expected to gain prominence in the coming decade as Latin America, already the largest net exporting region for agricultural products, is projected to increase its agricultural trade surplus further.

59. At the beginning of 2023, Panama enacted Law 352 that establishes the State Agrifood Policy, within which support to establish the Food Hub is indicated. While the support expressed by the Government of Panama and the private sector for the initiative to establish the Food Hub is ongoing, the current priority is to focus on post-recovery projects from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in education and health. Based on the preliminary analyses of the Food Hub Initiative, additional studies are underway on technical and regulatory feasibility on the 10 main food chains and logistics and transport dynamics through the Panama Canal.

60. **Colombia:** joined the HIH initiative in 2023. The Southwestern region was identified as the priority to direct investments in the dairy sector under the HIH framework. The Government is planning to participate in the HIH IF for the first time in 2023 and present their prioritized investments focused on agrosystemic management, productivity and competitiveness, formal association trade of primary products, and dairy processing and development of regional products for a total value of USD 34.9 million.

61. **The Dominican Republic:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2023 based on the close collaboration between the Government and FAO to contribute to the transformation of agrifood systems and strengthening access to markets for farmers located on the Haitian border. In particular, and under the framework of the HIH Initiative, the construction and consolidation of the Agro-industrial Centre of Enriquillo Norte was identified as a priority to be promoted. This project is part of the Border Zone Development Strategy – Productive Border Program.

62. At the HIH IF 2023, the Government plans to present an investment proposal valued at USD 30.15 million that is aimed to achieve both infrastructure development and the strengthening of producers' capacities, as well as improving market access.

63. **Ecuador:** joined the HIH Initiative in June 2020 and participated in the HIH IF in 2022. Based on the success of the HIH tools and analyses, at the HIH IF 2023 the Government of Ecuador has committed a total USD 244 million to this initiative and is using the HIH tools and approaches to guide their government investments, including at sub-national level.

64. Within the framework of the PIDARA<sup>3</sup> project, six sectorial trade fairs and one national investment forum are to be held between September and November in 2023. During these events, in which relevant national and international stakeholders are to participate, the characterization of the prioritized value chains is to be shared, as well as initial investment notes. As a result, new investment opportunities were identified and meetings with potential investors are to be held at national level. Ecuador is expected to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and present their priority investments in avocado, cocoa, and pitahaya (dragon fruit) for a total value of USD 95 million.

65. **El Salvador** joined the HIH in February 2021 and participated in the HIH IF 2022. As a result of the Forum, there are ongoing engagements for development of the coffee value chain in the voluntary carbon credit markets. A national forum was held in San Salvador in August 2023. During the event, the participants discussed and analysed the challenges, opportunities, and innovative solutions to promote sustainable agriculture and attract investment to the rural sector.

66. The Government is planning to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and present their investment plan to improve productivity and efficiency, strengthen post-harvest organization and improve the positioning of Salvadoran coffee in international markets for a value of USD 21.3 million.

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<sup>3</sup> Proyecto Integral de Diversificación Agroproductiva y Reconversión Agrícola

67. **Guatemala:** joined the HIH Initiative in April 2021. As a result of the HIH IF 2022 investment notes, investments for a value of USD 74 million have been mobilized by the Government. International financial institutions (IFIs) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) are engaging to partner with the Government on natural resource investments. Under the Dry Corridor Regional Initiative, USD 12 million were contributed by the Government of the United States of America for the SOILFER project in Guatemala and Honduras which complements existing initiatives under the HIH Initiative.
68. A national forum was held in Cobán, Alta Verapaz in September 2023. Representatives of the private sector, international organizations, multilateral banks and the public sector participated in the event, which aimed to promote strategic investments in the agricultural sector as well as to discuss the importance of promoting inclusive value chains for the development of rural territories.
69. The Government plans to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and present their prioritized investments on the promotion of inclusive agroproductive and resilient value chains, agro-industrial development and commercialization, infrastructure for production and related services and sustainable management of natural resources.
70. **Haiti:** joined the HIH Initiative in June 2020, FAO has been working extensively with the Government in the implementation of the HIH Initiative in the South-East region prioritizing the identification of investment proposals for the development of the yam and coffee value chains.
71. A Special Session on Haiti is planned during the IF 2023 to seek support for addressing urgent needs as well as building resilience in the country. The proposals to be discussed will seek to promote agrifood systems transformation and sustainable rural development by promoting family farming and invigorating public and private investments to make high socioeconomic impact in selected territories in Haiti.
72. **Honduras:** joined the HIH Initiative in May 2021 and participated in the HIH IF 2022. During the IF 2022, the Government presented their prioritized value chain investments on seed production, coffee and cocoa, valued at USD 104 million. Potential agreements and synergies with international cooperation partners are being explored.
73. Under the leadership and coordination of the Government through PRONAGRO and AGRONEGOCIOS of the Agriculture Secretary (SAG), with the support of the National Commission of Investment, two successful national events to promote investment for the agricultural sector were held in 2023. Within the Dry Corridor Regional Initiative, USD 12 million were contributed by the Government of the United States of America for the Soil mapping for resilient agrifood systems Central America and Sub-saharan Africa (SoiIFER) project in Guatemala and Honduras which complements existing initiatives under the HIH Initiative.
74. The Government is planning to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and present their prioritized investments on strengthening bean seed production, strengthening the cocoa and coffee value chains, and improvement of the competitiveness of the beekeeping chain.
75. **Nicaragua:** joined the HIH Initiative in June 2022 and participated in the HIH IF 2022. As a result of the HIH IF 2022, an international funding institution expressed interest in working with the Government on low emission coffee and livestock production, a private bank on the implementation of agroforestry systems through a voluntary carbon market and a private company on investing in coffee production in the country. A national forum was held in Managua in September 2023, where new alliances and collaborations were agreed and will contribute to improving the productivity and competitiveness of the sector.
76. The Government is also planning to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and present their prioritized investments on processing and value addition for dairy products, efficient management of coffee and bean crops, farm management with low carbon practices and forest plantations for a total value of USD 200 million.
77. **Paraguay:** joined the HIH Initiative in 2022. In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture banana and dairy value chains were prioritized, taking advantage of HIH maps and with the team's

support, investment proposals were developed for USD 13.3 million and USD 43.9 million respectively.

78. The Government is hoping to participate in the HIH IF 2023 and present these investment proposals with focus on banana and milk value chains.

79. **Peru:** Based on the HIH support, the Government of Peru has now committed USD 59 million during 2023-2024 to investment plans developed and supported under HIH Initiative in Cajamarca, Huancavelica, and Junín regions. 14 000 hectares of coffee and cocoa have also been identified as eligible to enter Rabobank's ACORN programme on carbon credits. Technical support was also received from the local private sector for the dairy investment proposed, to improve the productive, accounting and financial capacities of the dairy corridor cooperatives in La Libertad and Cajamarca.

80. Peru is planning to present their investment plan at the HIH IF 2023. The Ministry of Agriculture will present their new investment priorities on agroforestry and organic system of native cocoa and coffee, organic and highland avocado chain, and organic Native Potato Chains. In the preparations for the HIH IF 2023, a potential collaboration is emerging with a nationally-based large agrobusiness and commercial company to support to enhancement of the organic and highland avocado chain, especially for export.

### **III. Development of the HIH Dashboard**

81. The upgrading of a programming dashboard has continued, with data from HIH countries made available and directly linked to the ongoing monitoring of progress made in mobilization of identified investments, as reported by the countries. Improvements have been made to partially automatize data collection globally using google data sheets which has proven to be effective.

82. The dashboard architecture is still undergoing final developments to improve user experience based on ongoing feedback received. This is in accordance with the Organization's effort to modernize its information and communications technology (ICT) approach, capacity and transparency as well as programme monitoring processes.

83. The dashboard provides regular, real-time reporting of progress against programme activities and processes. It now also provides key results, such as the case of Bangladesh with the recent investments of USD 543 million and USD 45 million, and Ecuador with USD 244 million in government planned investments.

### **IV. Communication on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative**

84. The communication strategy, which sets to boost the Hand-in-Hand Initiative's capacity to engage investors, donors and partners, is being rolled out. Country pages of the HIH website were enriched with details on follow-up country-level activities including eight national and two subregional investment fora, technical visits, and support for human capacity development e.g., on the Geospatial Platform.

85. An innovative HIH QR code card was also developed and widely distributed, which in line with FAO practices provides an effective means of sharing and disseminating the key FAO data access points for Hand-in-Hand – the Geospatial Platform, the Data Lab and the Hand-in-Hand Dashboard.

86. In preparation for the HIH IF 2023, the HIH team has developed communication products to encourage and support engagements and held briefings with partners. Communication materials and all information on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative are available on its website: <https://www.fao.org/hand-in-hand/en>.