



Investing in rural people



Bundesministerium für
wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
und Entwicklung



BMZ – VISA Foundation - IFAD Partnership

Creating Rural Youth Employment Opportunities: Support to
Integrated Agribusiness Hubs in Africa

Annual Progress Report

December 2021 – November 2022

Report prepared for
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The programme has developed the following definitions of training, internship, apprenticeship and mentoring. While some of these definitions are inspired by the definitions used by the International Labour Organization (ILO), they have been adapted to cater to the nature, scope and breadth of support the programme provides to youth.

Training: Refers to the provision of structured theoretical and practical knowledge impartment sessions by specialised service providers with the view to developing specific competencies. Trainings seek to increase trainee awareness, understanding, knowledge and competences on a given topic to render knowledge actionable towards employment and self-employment.

Internship: Short term work experience during which the intern receives on-the-job training, and gains experience in a specific field or career area supported by the agribusiness hubs programme. Internships are one of the channels used by the programme to expose beneficiaries to potential employers and further develop practical skills. Internships under the agrihub programme will have a duration of 3-6 months on average, and will be either unpaid or paid. Unpaid interns will however receive minimal support to enable participation.

Apprenticeship: Is a system for training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training and often some accompanying in class study. Apprenticeships can also enable practitioners to gain a license to practice in a regulated occupation. Depending on the field or occupation been pursued, the duration of apprenticeship ranges from 1 to 3 years or more/less. Apprenticeships under the programme will last on average, 6 months to 2 years and will be either unpaid or paid. However, unpaid apprentices will receive minimal support to enable their participation in the apprenticeship opportunities facilitated by the programme.

Mentoring: Comprises all work-based learning programmes such as internships, apprenticeships, traineeships, industrial attachments etc. for wage employment and business bootcamps, incubation and accelerations programmes for self-employment.

Partnering Host: Organization assuming the management of the agribusiness hub programme at country level. The partnering host manages and coordinates all operations related to the programme in country and is responsible for delivering expected results.

Industry attachment: A structured, credit-bearing work experience in a professional work setting during which the student applies and acquires knowledge and skills.

ACRONYMS

AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AGRF	African Green Revolution Forum
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for African Development
BAGC	Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor
BDS	Business Development Services
BMZ	The (German) Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
DWLIW	Decent Work and Living Incomes and Wages Coalition
ECG	Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion Division (at IFAD)
FAFOTRAJ	Farmers' Forum for Trade and Social Justice
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
GCF	Green Climate Funding
GIZ	German Society for International Cooperation
GPDRD	Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
IAC	Chimoio Agrarian Institute
ICO	IFAD Country Office
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IITA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture
ILC	International Land Coalition
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IPRC	Integrated Professional and Research Colleges
IPEME	Institute for Small and Medium Enterprises
KEPSA	Kenya Private Sector Alliance
KM	Knowledge Management
LIFE-ND	Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises Project in the Niger Delta of Nigeria
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid Term Review
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSO	Non-Sovereign Lending Operation
PH	Partnering Host
P2P	Peer to Peer
PWD	People with Disabilities
RIA	(IFAD's) Results and Impact Assessment Division
RYAF	Rural Youth in Agribusiness Forum
SDF	Skills Development Fund
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SH	Sexual Harassment
ToT	Training of Trainers
TEVETA	Training, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Schools
VCDP	Value Chain Development Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following interim report covers the physical progress made period December 2021 to End of September 2022. Also, the report highlights key issues, emerging lessons and next steps based on field reports and supervision/implementation support missions and the findings of the programme's mid-term review (MTR) carried out in the third quarter of 2022.

To date, the programme has launched operations in the nine countries participating in the Agribusiness Hubs Programme: Nigeria, Rwanda, Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, and Malawi. To date the programme has targeted 1,114 youth in five countries who currently are in different phases of the support process embedded in the programme (hub nurturing or post-hub nurturing).

The first set of countries to launch Agribusiness Hub operations, Nigeria and Rwanda, have to date targeted 542 and 354 youth, respectively. These include the youth from cohort 1 who have transited into phase III (post-hub nurturing) and cohort two who are currently in the phase II (hub-nurturing). In these two countries, that is, the proportion of youth finding employment comes to 41% in Nigeria and in 39% Rwanda 2-3 months after concluding training. Slight improvements are observed in Nigeria over time, from 41% to 50% with the model adopted in the Nigeria hub for youth to transition from phase II to phase III.

The use of dual training programmes combining tailored training in TVET institutions and industrial attachments in Nigeria and Rwanda is regarded as far more impactful than classic training in TVET institutions alone. In fact, the dual training approach is being replicated by participating TVET institutions to increase the impact of their skills development on youth employability. Having said this, the hubs in both countries, Rwanda and Nigeria, have found the need to further refine their dual training approach to be fully responsive to private sector demands. Concretely, by extending the industry attachment component of the approach. As a result, the hub in Nigeria is currently using two discrete dual training pathways for youth following wage and self-employment tracks; now those following the wage employment track are spending substantially more time exposed to employers through short internships. In turn, the Rwanda hub is in the process of finetuning its approach to increase the duration of youth exposure to employers.

Employers in both countries have expressed that technical and soft skills need to be complemented by a robust understanding of the overall business and its operational models – something that is usually gained with experience, but that unemployed and underemployed youth with limited or no prior exposure to the formal labour market have not been able to gain.

Operations in Cameroon, Kenya and Mozambique have laid the foundations for ecosystem development by aggressively pursuing and securing partnerships with private companies, development actors (i.e. GIZ, IFAD) and employment agencies. These efforts have complemented the preparatory studies on value chain analysis, labour market assessments and institutional analysis. Following the programme's approach, the Partnering Host (PH) have used the studies and involved stakeholders in the development of market relevant learning curricula for rural youth. The hubs in the three countries are currently engaged the first cohort of youth with 27 in Cameroon, 110 in Kenya and 87 in Mozambique.

Algeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar and Malawi launched the project in September 2022. Scoping missions allowed for consultations and built awareness among key stakeholders, identified possibilities of synergies with other projects and obtained strong buy in from key stakeholders. The labour market assessment studies have been launched in three of the four countries and others will be forthcoming. At the same the partnering host, International Labour Organization (ILO) is putting in place all necessary management systems for prompt, smooth and robust operations. Project staff recruitment has largely been completed. The regional ILO project coordinator based in Abidjan as well

as country national coordinators have been recruited and are on board. Administrative and financial assistants will be onboarding by end of year.

The impact of climate change and the new opportunities in markets of green products – such as organic food, building materials and cooking briquettes from agricultural waste – drives the Integrated Youth Agribusiness Hubs programme to integrate a green dimension in its intervention model. This includes promoting green, climate-smart agricultural practices and the sourcing and use of renewable inputs, esp. energy. Through capacity building and green skills development at the Satellite institutions, the engagement and employability of youth in green agribusiness has improved. Besides, green start-ups have been supported, through business incubation and acceleration. From an institutional perspective, the programme has become an active player in the growing ecosystem services systems for green business and jobs, in particular those related to decentralized renewable energy provisions. This new role makes the programme and its partners also more attractive for future climate finance. Progress has been made in terms of integrating RE in the country hubs. With Nigeria, Kenya and Rwanda on the lead in terms of possibilities explored. A number of technologies have been considered for the programme and tools developed to help the hubs ascertain the level of interest in RE among youth.

While the focus of the Agribusiness Hubs remains in consolidating the ecosystems to effectively facilitate youth access to employment, the hubs in each of the five countries operating to date continue investing efforts in integrating nutrition perspectives as a structural element in their approaches. Each country has integrated the measures which have seemed most appropriate and viable in their context without derailing attention from the primary aim: creating employment for rural youth. These include, promoting nutrition education, promoting vegetable gardens, supporting entrepreneurship projects that contribute towards enhancing nutrition, etc.

The Agribusiness Hub MTR also provided with important findings of significant weight to steer programme operations in all participating countries. Key findings include:

- Geographic targeting for the wage employment track needs to focus on where the greatest potential for employment for rural youth is for the ecosystem approach to be effective.
- The programme has been targeting youth of rural origin who would likely not make it into formal employment without programme support and have very limited options beyond the informal economy and thus continue to be under or unemployed. The youth targeted are largely those living in or vulnerable to poverty – even if they are not the poorest of the poor.
- High satisfaction of youth with the training programme offered.
- Although, the industry-based exposure that is part of the dual training approach needs to increase to meet industry player skills requirements.
- Employment outcomes though, which are the focus of the programme, are lower than expected. Also, transitioning from training to employment has taken longer than expected.
- The initial stages of ecosystem building need to include stakeholders that can fulfil all the functions required for the ecosystem to result in actual rural youth employment (technical, business / management, market and soft skills training, different work-based upskilling mechanisms, linking / matchmaking services, financial services, coaching and on the job mentoring, and convening).
- The Agribusiness Hubs Ecosystems approach seems to be best suited for medium skilled youth (with secondary education or technical equivalent), as these are the profile of people that employers have difficulties in engaging due to skillsets being below minimum requirements and expectations.

The following key recommendations from the MTR will be considered to maximize the possibilities of programme success in recently onboarded programme countries, in each Agribusiness Hub phase:

- Phase I:

- Strengthen the integration of financial services functions in phase I, but make provisions for ongoing integration of all types of stakeholders, especially potential employers.
- Ensure that studies inform the consolidation of the strategy to be adopted by each of the hubs in terms of sectors, commodities, geographic areas, skills gaps to address, etc. prior to starting operations with an increased focus on wage employment.
- Phase II:
 - Increase youth exposure to potential employers of the industry of their preference to gain the rounded understanding of the industry they do not have due to lack of formal employment trajectory.
 - Assess multiple mechanisms suited to each context for work-based placements. Explore incentive mechanisms to increase efficiencies.
- Phase III:
 - Increase the length of time required for youth to transition from upskilling to employment – the transition can take time for at least half of the youth targeted.
 - Systematise follow up / mentoring and coaching approaches in the self-employment track to increase effectiveness, impact and the possibility of microbusinesses supported being the source of decent employment opportunities for other youth.

Accumulated experience in the five countries currently training youth plus the learning captured through the programme's MTR constitute a fertile ground to make substantial headway from this point forward and achieve quicker results.

During the reporting period, a standardized M&E framework for the measurement of employment and income effects was developed in coordination with the different agribusiness hubs. Employment definitions have been adapted to the two employment pathways that are being promoted by the hubs: wage employment, and self-employment / entrepreneurship.

IFAD continues to provide full-time implementation support with one programme manager and five technical consultants. Field visits have resumed with the ease of international travel restrictions. Implementation support missions have been carried out in all five countries undergoing operations. IFAD staff and consultants have also participated in the project launches in Algeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar and Malawi and engage in regular technical and managerial communications with all nine countries.

IFAD continues to actively engage in building partnerships to strengthen the programme, among which are GIZ, key government institutions/agencies together with education and training institutions in each of the target countries. At global level, the Fund continues engaging with platforms on technical domains that have a bearing on the programme, including the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) the Decent Work and Living Incomes and Wages (DWLIW) Coalition, amongst others.

The programme developed a communication plan to give more visibility to the Agribusiness Hub objectives, progress, testimonies from the field and emerging results. Initial activities are already being implemented (podcasts). Additional communication activities in the pipeline include the establishment of a website and the production of guidance notes. This year the project participated in a number of international avenues such as the Annual General Assembly (AGA) for the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) summit in Rwanda. Additionally, the programme will participate in Global COP27 Climate Conference. Participation in these venues constitute opportunities to raise awareness for the need to address rural under and unemployment of youth, share lessons learnt, and increase the programme's strategic and operational visibility, the need for climate sensitive youth financing and other emerging themes for rural youth.

During the reporting period, IFAD received a contribution of EUR 2 million from BMZ and USD 583, 970 from the VISA Foundation (3rd and 2nd tranches of funding respectively). Table 1 highlights expenses to date.

Summary of programme budget to actual (as of 5th December 2022)

Funding source	Funding¹	Spent to date	Funding available
BMZ (EUR)	5,520,000.00	3,917,577.43	1,604,263.84
The Visa Foundation (USD)	2,147,252.40	1,018,002.37	1,129,250.03
IFAD (USD)	3,500,000.00	1,413,870.70	2,086,129.30

¹ Amount cited from BMZ and the Visa Foundation correspond to amounts available to the programme after deduction of IFAD's management fee.

1. Introduction

General Information

IFAD Division: **Environment, Climate, Gender and Social Inclusion (ECG)**

Country/Region: **Nigeria, Rwanda, Mozambique, Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Ivory Coast and Algeria**

Starting Date: **19th December 2019**

Expected Closing Date: **31st December 2024**

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2. Programme Description and Objectives

2.1 Goal and Objectives

The goal of the Creating Rural Youth Employment Opportunities: Support to Integrated Agribusiness Hubs in Africa Programme is to **create sustainable employment and income generating opportunities for rural youth in agriculture related activities.**

The objective of the programme is to **develop a network of integrated agribusiness hubs that facilitate youth access to employment and build entrepreneurial, technical/managerial skills among youth to establish profitable enterprises.** The specific objectives of the programme are:

Objective 1: Increased self and wage employment opportunities for youth through functional networks of integrated agribusiness hubs.

Objective 2: Evidence-based knowledge products on youth employment using integrated agribusiness hub model to influence policy shifts, and to enable other development actors (public, private and semi-private) to scale up wholly or parts of the model.

2.2 Expected Outputs and Outcomes

The programme expects to achieve the following two outcomes:

Outcome 1. Increased wage and self-employment opportunities for youth through functional networks of integrated agribusiness hubs.

Outcome 2. Evidence-based knowledge products on youth employment using integrated agribusiness hub model influence policy shifts, and enable other development actors (public, private and semi-private) to scale up models used by the programme or parts of it.

2.3 Components and Activities

As expressed in past reports, and in line with donor agreements, the programme consists of two technical components, as follows:

Component 1 – Agribusiness Hub Support and Capacity Development. Component 1 focuses on start-up arrangements, establishing the agribusiness hubs and developing an integrated support programme to facilitate effective access to wage and self-employment opportunities among rural youth. The component develops capacities to strengthen the governance framework for partnership arrangements, where the role of private and public sector stakeholders is underscored. Agribusiness hub activities take into consideration country context to allow hub Partnering Hosts (PHs) to shape their delivery modalities to align with the country situations best suited to create youth employment opportunities. This component has two sub-components: *(i) pre-hub system development* and; *(ii) hub operations.*

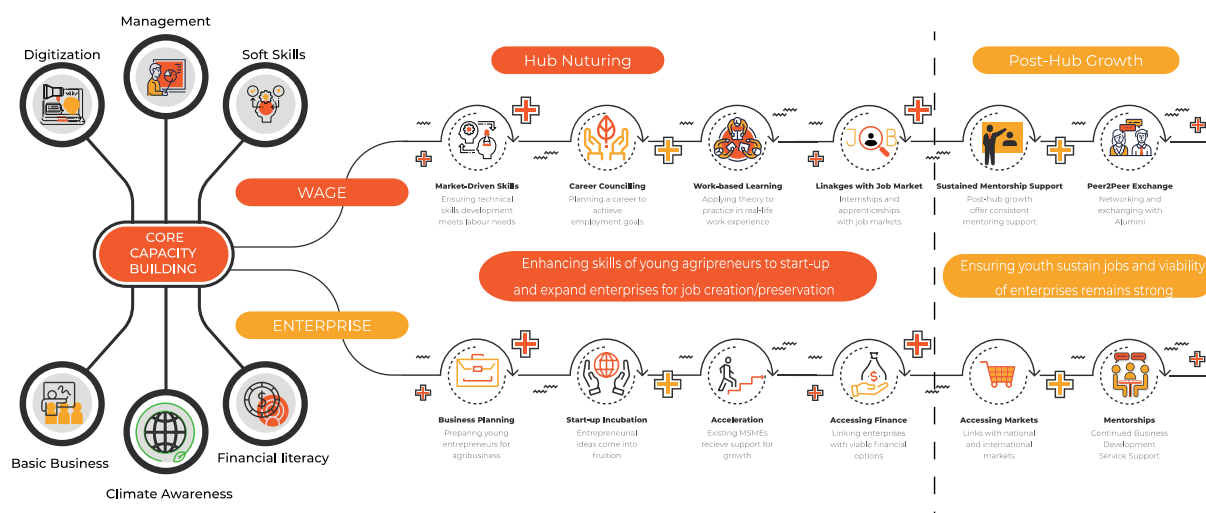
Component 2 – Knowledge sharing for policy dialogue and scaling-up. Component 2 aims to capture the experience and document knowledge emerging from the interventions and results from component 1. It will also build on the baseline and track project performance through a robust and utilisation-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. In essence, it aims to generate and publish knowledge using all relevant data and information into knowledge products, policy briefs and case studies that highlight best practices and lessons learned. Dissemination activities will also use communication channels relevant for different audiences including testing a peer to peer (P2P) knowledge sharing platform.

2.4 Ecosystems Approach

The programme is implemented through a flexible and context specific hub development approach towards agribusiness hub **ecosystem** development for youth. The ecosystem approach is premised on the idea that training alone cannot unlock the entire employment potential for young people. To

be truly successful in mediating employment opportunities all actors need to be working within an enabling environment. The hubs actively identify private entities and individuals, public sector actors and members of civil society. These partnerships are fostered around three work streams within commodity value chains: (1) market-driven production, (2) post-harvest management and (c) access to goods and services. Together, these players and their roles constitute the agribusiness hub ecosystem. To ensure youth-owned enterprises are able to tap into the best possible markets, participating young people receive support both during and after their time with the hubs in registering their businesses, complying with social security requirements, unions and workers' freedom of association.

Figure 1: Holistic incubation process adopted by the programme



The agribusiness hubs integrated and holistic model is organized into three distinct phases: (i) pre-hub preparation, (ii) hub nurturing and (iii) post-hub growth. Within the hubs, young women and men are offered opportunities to sharpen their skillsets along two pathways: wage employment and self-employment.

During the pre-hub phase, a systematic approach is adopted to research the key employment challenges and opportunities. The pre-hub phase is a critical precursor to hub interventions as it leads to optimal planning and sharpening of interventions. In addition to engagement with the wider ecosystem, rural youth are also consulted to better understand their status and ambitions. During the hub nurturing and post-hub growth phases, youth are channeled through two distinct pathways: **wage employment** and **self-employment** (see Figure 1). A precursor to each pathway is core capacity-building that includes digitization, soft-skills enhancement and climate awareness along with basic financial and management skills development. Within the **wage employment pathway**, youth are trained in labour demand skills and specific technical aspects. Wherever possible, practical experience is acquired through work-based training.

Subsequently, the hubs offer career counselling and match-making services youth directly with employers through internship programmes. Hub graduates maintain peer-to-peer exchanges on opportunities. Within the **self-employment pathway**, youth are trained in business development either through incubation for start-up enterprises or through acceleration for existing micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The hubs also engage with financial intermediaries and markets to link young people with business proposals for accessing credit and new opportunities. Young agripreneurs trained through the hubs will continue to receive mentorship support services

2.5 Targeting Strategy

The programme adopts a comprehensive targeting approach based on geographic targeting, choice of beneficiaries, commodities offering profitable opportunities to youth, self-targeting, and a comprehensive set of measures that seek to equip and empower youth to transition into wage and self-employment. The programme seeks to directly target a total of 11,275 youth (50% male 50% female). And indirectly create 11,275 decent jobs for youth.

Targeting strategy. The programme adopted a standardised approach for the development of country specific targeting strategies with the use of a template specifically developed by IFAD in consultation with the country hubs, for the programme. Each of the countries has adapted the strategy to the local context using common targeting principles that recognise the heterogeneity of youth and promote both social inclusion and gender equality in the pathways to wage and self-employment. Streamlining the process and tools has allowed for comprehensiveness, comparison across countries while at the same time catering to local contexts.

Table 1: Summary information on outreach targets by agribusiness hub

Country	Partnering Host	Project Launch	Target areas	Age	Commodity focus	N. target beneficiaries agreed with PHs*
NIGERIA	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)	July 2020	National in scope with hubs located in: Oyo and Imo States, and Abuja.	18-29	Aquaculture, poultry, snailery, green house vegetables, cassava, livestock and mushroom.	WE: 1,540 E: 660 SUB-TOTAL: 2,200 I: 3,300 TOTAL: 5,500
RWANDA	Kilimo Trust	July 2020	National in scope with Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges in: Musanze, Gishari, Kigale and Huye.	18-30	Dairy, Poultry, Piggery, Potatoes, Maize, Rice, and Vegetables.	WE: 840 E: 360 SUB-TOTAL: 1,200 I: 1,800 TOTAL: 3,000
KENYA	Procasur	September 2021	Nakuru, Kakamega and Kilifi, and possibly from others targeted by GIZ, ILO and IFAD projects.	18-34	Fresh vegetables, dairy, cassava, fisheries, groundnuts, livestock, green grams and poultry.	WE: 875 E: 375 SUB-TOTAL: 1,250 I: 1,875 TOTAL: 3,125
CAMEROON	Procasur	September 2021	Agrihub locations and vicinities.	18-35	Cassava, maize, plantain, horticulture, ginger, palm oil, tree pepper, cocoa, poultry, and piggery.	WE: 875 E: 375 SUB-TOTAL: 1,250 I: 1,875 TOTAL: 3,125
MOZAMBIQUE	BAGC	October 2021	The Beira Corridor, namely, Sofala, Manica and Tete Provinces.	18-35	Horticulture, aquaculture, poultry, piggery and sesame.	WE: 600 E: 600 SUB-TOTAL: 1,200 I: 1,800 TOTAL: 3,000
MALAWI	ILO	September 2022	Chitipa (Northern Region), Dedza (Central Region) and Chikwawa (Southern Region).*	18-35	To be determined	WE: 1050 E: 450 SUB-TOTAL: 1,500 I: 2,250 TOTAL: 3,750
MADAGASCAR	ILO	September 2022	Vakinankaratra, Vatovavy Fitovinany and Analamanga.*	18-35	To be determined	WE: 1050 E: 450 SUB-TOTAL: 1,500 I: 2,250 TOTAL: 3,750
IVORY COAST	ILO	September 2022	- Northern territory, Bagoué, Poro, Tchologo. - Central territory, Belier, Iffou, Nzi Comoé, Béré, Gbéké. - South Western territory, San Pédro, Nawa and Gbôklè.*	18-35	To be determined	WE: 1050 E: 450 SUB-TOTAL: 1,500 I: 2,250 TOTAL: 3,750
ALGERIA	ILO	September 2022	Biskra-Oued, Guelma and Mostaganem have been preliminarily selected.*	18-35	Milk, vegetable crops, cereal, dates, citrus fruits, tomato paste, and olive oil.	WE: 770 E: 330 SUBTOTAL: 1,100 I: 1,500 TOTAL: 2,600

WE = wage employment; E= entrepreneurship; I= indirect jobs.

* Final target areas to be confirmed after preparatory studies have been completed.

2.6 Annual Budget Distribution by Expenditure Category

The programme has a budget of EUR 10 million from BMZ, USD 3.5 million from Visa foundation and USD 3.5 million from IFAD. Costs are distributed across agreed line items. Tables 2, 3 and 4 provide details of cost allocations per funding stream.

Table 2: BMZ Budget Contribution (EUR)

Description	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Total
Salaries and allowances	330,000	330,000	330,000	330,000	330,000	1,650,000
Consultancies	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	350,000	1,750,000
Travel and allowances	86,000	86,000	86,000	86,000	86,000	430,000
Workshops	46,000	46,000	46,000	46,000	46,000	230,000
Equipment and materials	1,028,000	1,028,000	1,028,000	1,028,000	1,028,000	5,140,000
Management fees	160,000	160,000	160,000	160,000	160,000	800,000
Total	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	10,000,000

Table 3: Budget Visa Foundation Contribution (USD)

Description	Total
Salaries and allowances	577,500
Consultancies	612,500
Travel and allowances	150,500
Workshops	84,000
Equipment and materials	1,795,500
Management fees	280,000
Total	3,500,000

Table 4: Budget IFAD Contribution (USD)

Description	Total
Salaries and allowances	1,163,000
Consultancies	218,000
Travel and allowances	237,000
Workshops	163,000
Equipment and materials	511,000
Training	760,000
Sub-grants	26,000
Operating costs	163,000
Management fees	259,000
Total	3,500,000

3. PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Overall Progress

This section provides an overview of the cumulative physical progress made across the programme portfolio in each one of the three programme phases, along with cross cutting issues. Following, key information is provided separately in individual country tables. Management issues and tools are covered in sections 5 and 6 of this report.

Pre-Hub: Launch of the country level agribusiness hubs and preparatory steps

The programme has been launched in the nine participating countries.

The following **PHs have been selected**: the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) leads operations in Nigeria (July 2020); Kilimo Trust in Rwanda (July 2020); Procasur in Cameroon and Kenya (September 2021); the Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor (BAGC) in Mozambique (October 2021), and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the remaining four countries, namely, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar and Malawi (agreement signed in June 2022). The bidding and selection process of the PHs for the four countries for which agreements have been recently signed followed the same rigorous process in line with IFADs competitive procurement process.

Nigeria, Rwanda, Mozambique, Cameroon, and Kenya concluded the pre-hub phase successfully between 2021 and 2022. During the reporting period the hubs in Cameroon, Kenya and Mozambique made key investments to initiate operations scheduled for this phase. This includes the design of training curricula, minor infrastructural improvements and purchase of equipment relevant to the skills building packages to be supported by the programme in these countries. The same will occur in Algeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar and Malawi during the first quarter of 2023.

At present, the hubs in Algeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar and Malawi are fully immersed in starting the first activities of phase I: preliminary studies. Preliminary studies on labour market assessments and value chain analysis have been crucial in fine tuning hub design and operations in Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria and Rwanda, particularly to inform the detailed design and development of business incubation and accelerators interventions, work-based learning programmes and the respective development and refinement of training curriculums including design of responsive short courses and the accreditation systems. The development of all interventions has and will continue following a participatory approach involving education and training institutions, employer organizations, business associations and other key stakeholders in the agribusiness hub ecosystem.

In the four countries where the project has been recently launched the studies will be followed by the review of the proposal submitted for each country with the view to refine the project strategy, and thus enable the project to develop its targeting strategy, aggressively initiate partnering efforts with all relevant players that can fulfil needed ecosystem functions and integrating minor upgrades and acquiring necessary equipment required for training.

The MTR found that it is crucial that partnership building efforts be materialised for all functions required by the ecosystem in the pre-hub phase, namely: private sector players (and other potential employers), training and other entities collaborating in the youth upskilling process, entities providing match-making services between employers and potential employees, the range of players providing access to financial services or grants to entrepreneurs, and others, as well as establishing a



Picture 1: Agribusiness hub partnership building workshop in Yaoundé, Cameroon 2022

system for continuous integration of new players in the ecosystem. Doing so is expected to both reduce the time required for the transition of youth from upskilling to employment – and thus minimize the possibility of loss of skills – as well as increase the potential of employment for youth.

Collaboration, linkages and partnerships. Anchored by its ecosystem approach, the agribusiness hubs have developed collaborative engagements with a number of players, including 61 education and training institutions; 390 industry players to participate in internships and apprenticeships; 18 employment service providers; 26 business development services; 22 financial institutions and 22 GIZ projects/ development programmes (See table 5 below). Such collaborative endeavours, linkages and partnerships will continue expanding in the five countries with running operations as the programme continues making progress in implementation and developing their respective ecosystems. Experience to date highlights the intrinsic value of inclusive participation of all relevant players who have a role to play in re-skilling, upskilling, linking, employing, and supporting youth in developing and strengthening micro and small businesses.

Table 5: Summary of established linkages and collaborations, per country

Countries	Education & Training Institutions	Industry (employers / enterprises)	Employment Service Providers	Business Development Service Providers	Financial Institutions	GIZ Projects / development Programmes
Rwanda	7	87	1	3	4	6
Nigeria	22	62	6	6	5	2
Kenya	6	40	2	2	3	2
Cameroon	6	21	1	5	4	6
Mozambique	5	81	2	3	3	2
Malawi	8	15	1	2	1	1
Madagascar	4	74	3	1	2	1
Ivory Coast	3	10	2	4	0	2
Algeria						
TOTAL	61	390	18	26	22	22

Experience and the programme's mid-term review (MTR) show that the ecosystem for rural youth employment needs to be continuously engaged to reflect the dynamism of the labour market along skills requirements for the ecosystem to remain relevant and continue fulfilling its function for all participating players, especially under/underemployed youth and employers looking for candidates to meet their human resource needs.

Partners in Nigeria and Rwanda have been engaged in continued learning and expansion, by continuously establishing new partnerships. In fact, each country has adopted a unique approach towards identifying and engaging stakeholders. An example from Kenya of how this has been approached can be found in Box 1.

The programme will be looking into the costs associated with partnership building under the different ecosystems models developed under the programme and identifying the most cost-effective models of achieving functional ecosystems for rural youth employment.

Box 1: Employers come into the ecosystem in Kenya

In Kenya, USTADI the lead implementing partner for the programme, and has secured a working partnership with the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) representing 4,500 employers countrywide, as well as with the Agriculture Sector Network (ASNET) who bring on board members engaged in agriculture and policy formulation from the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA). Ustadi is also working with Cooperative Bank of Kenya to provide a digital e-wallet to each of the youth that will transition through the hubs as trainees.

Participation of both ASNET and FKE is crucial as it will form the basis for matching skills with opportunities with private sector and particularly with employers. Both FKE and ASNET will be key in identifying employers within their networks for in-company placement, apprenticeship and on the job training. Their members will also participate as virtual trainers in each of the hubs.

Ustadi is working closely with the hubs and has engaged with over 40 private sector institutions within the overall ecosystem directly to provide job placement opportunities.

Hub nurturing: On boarding of youth

A total of 1,114 youth have been / are being targeted in the programme across Nigeria (542), Rwanda (354), Cameroon (21), Kenya (110) and Mozambique (87). One cohort of youth completed phase II in Nigeria (the second cohort is undergoing training at present) and in Rwanda (next one upcoming in January 2022). Mozambique recently onboarded its first cohort of youth.

Mobilization and beneficiary selection approaches adopted by hubs are context specific and have been seen to evolve in Nigeria and Rwanda to increase efficiency in data management. Some of the measures adopted include issuing, contrary to what was initially thought, new calls for applications, shortening the timeframe for applications and even decentralizing them to the areas around the training / work placement centre where most of the upskilling process will occur. These developments are considered as positive as PHs refine their understanding of ecosystem for rural youth employment management and identify new strategies to manage processes associated with the ecosystem and of accompanying youth down the trajectories it offers.

In what relates to the programmes' socially inclusive targeting approach, experience with the first cohort in Rwanda and Nigeria shows they onboarded primarily older youth, for which corrective measures are being adopted to ensure that younger youth are not left behind. The ratios between male and female youth are relatively consistent with the parity target in Nigeria and Rwanda. Also, opportunities have been created for youth with disabilities – even if only a limited group of youth have been onboarded, the achievement is commendable and a result of the project's sensitization efforts among private sector players.

Innovations in the upskilling process across participating countries have included thus far the adoption of separate upskilling paths for the two employment tracks (Nigeria), prolonging the work placement period (Rwanda) and even placing youth directly in industries (Cameroon).

Interesting results have been observed in terms of the outcomes of youth participation in the programme, suggesting that the transition from phase II (upskilling) to phase III (employment) is not automatic for all youth; a more conservative approach appears to be better suited for rural youth.

Progress against targets (outcomes) has been lower than expected. The MTR confirms that in these two countries the proportion of youth finding employment comes to 41% in Nigeria and in 39% Rwanda 2-3 months after concluding the training offered by the project. Slight improvements are observed in Nigeria over time, with an increase from 41% to 50%. The results relate to the model

adopted in the Nigeria hub for youth to transition from phase II to phase III, which has encountered two important barriers: the absence of a suitable stakeholder to assume the matchmaking / linking function between trained youth and potential employers (for the wage employment track) and the difficulties encountered in the financial sector providing credit to youth, especially for start-ups. (The data available for Rwanda does not allow for a longitudinal analysis given that the process of upskilling in that country started later than in Nigeria.)

The MTR also observes that in Nigeria and Rwanda there has been a bias toward self-employment thus far. Key causes for this include: in Nigeria, communication transmitted in cohort 1 to onboarded youth led to think the project would provide a grant at the end of the training towards the establishment or acceleration of existing and low profit micro businesses. Also, initially, when the first cohort of youth were onboarded in the programme considered only and strictly the value chains identified through the studies and the geographic areas established in the proposal submitted by the lead IFAD partner in each country.

An equally informative result of the MTR is that, thus far, is that the proportion of youth with the highest proportion of access to wage employment in Nigeria and Rwanda are youth with secondary education or equivalent from a vocational training institution, that is, medium skilled youth. Lower skilled youth face greater difficulties as employers tend to prefer contracting skills with slightly more educational background and skills. Conversely, youth with higher education engaged to date have greater expectations than the jobs available; and employers prefer not to hire overeducated youth for the posts available requiring less skills.

Post- hub nurturing: Initiating the transition of skilled youth into employment

Partnerships and linkages to strengthen post-hub nurturing. The issue of matchmaking is crucial at this stage as youth transition from the skills building phase to walk the path towards wage employment. PHs in Nigeria and Rwanda are exploring different possibilities such as bringing potential employers to the training institutions before “graduation”; the development of partnerships with employment promoting agencies (such as was done in Nigeria with Jobberman); the development of digital platforms for job seekers and employers, as well as different options for internships and apprenticeships programmes.

All of these require the development of solid partnerships to create long lasting solutions that are not only effective but that are also sustainable over time. Experience during the reporting period though, shows that in Nigeria at least, the partners identified for the linking function of the ecosystem does not handle jobs such as those offered to rural youth with medium level education. While continuing engagement with Jobberman is not discarded it is likely to only be suited for vacancies for posts requiring higher education.

Box 2. Nigeria industrial attachment opportunities equips youth in market intelligence.

Soilless farms, a training partner in one of the hubs in Nigeria, applies a unique component to work based learning whereby youth participating in the hub’s vegetable production training need to do their own practical market research as part of the work based training.

Participating youth visit restaurants, hotels, food processors and private customers to understand their demand, quality requirements and price. While youth interviewed participating in this activity reached in the MTR reported that it took them a lot of courage to conduct these conversations with potential customers, the approach appears to have a significant learning effect. These youth who are now set to pursue their own micro businesses confidently discuss the specific market niche they seek to serve as well as their competitive advantage.

The practical market training has resulted in a mind-set shift among participating youth about the potential of their business ideas: they now regard their business operations from a market perspective. More, several youths are already working together with clients that they identified during the market research.

Also, the time required during this phase of transitioning youth between phases II and III and then providing them with ongoing support (notably to those choosing the self-employment pathway) is likely to be longer than what was initially foreseen at the start of operations.

Finally, the MTR found that the approach adopted to date in Nigeria and Rwanda with the first set of youth targeted encompassed positive elements but required more structure and a systematic approach that enables youth targeted not only to be trained, but to achieve project outcomes: youth with employment. In light of this IFAD technical staff and consultants will engage with the country teams to produce guidelines for the provision of support to rural youth in phase III, post-hub support, that can be shared with, used and adapted by each of the countries.

Cross cutting issues

Green jobs. During the reporting period the following activities have been carried out, despite slower than expected progress:

- Regular on -line support has been provided to Kenya, Rwanda, and Nigeria for the implementation of the agreed Green Action Plans to mainstream and expand a green dimension.
- Support has been provided to Cameroon to finalize the draft action plans elaborated in 2021 and guide the implementation of the agreed steps where appropriate.
- Initial guidance has been offered to the ILO as implementation partner for the 3rd group of countries (i.e. Algeria, Ivory Coast, Malawi and Madagascar).
- A review of opportunities and constraints for access to green finance for youth has been completed.

Key challenges identified limiting the scope of results in integrating the green dimension into the programme include:

- The remote nature of the support leaves some important data gaps in IFAD's technical experts' assessment of the actual green employment situation in the respective countries. A country mission has been undertaken to overcome this challenge. The mission confirmed the desirability of visits to the other project countries as well, in order to improve the effectiveness of the support.
- The changes in implementation plans (Nigeria) and the heavy work schedules (Mozambique) have delayed exchanges with the respective programmes.
- The low incidence of active portfolios of green finance for youth has constrained the identification of good practices and the formulation of recommendations.

The Agribusiness Hubs programme recognises that there is need to attract more green private sector players in the hubs; Project teams in each of the countries will be encouraged to continuously reassess the emergence of new green players. More capacity building among project staff and partners on green dimension will also be provided through a variety of means. Finally, the hubs required further mobilization of financial sector players to develop appropriate and affordable products for rural youth.

Renewable energies. A number of activities in support of the integration of renewable energy (RE) solutions have been carried out during the reporting period, including the development of material covering five technologies (solar pumping systems, bio-gas digesters, solar animal feed processing machine, solar dryers and solar poultry incubators). A tracer study was also developed to gauge the interest of youth in each of the country hubs to understand the level of interest in RE in selected value chains. A roadmap for the integration of RE in the training curricula to be used in training centers and capacity building activities (Training of Trainers, ToT) was also developed and training organized for instructors in Kenya and Nigeria from the Solar Grid Academy (SGA), through RES4Africa.

Sustainability practices must be promoted in the agriculture value chains, particularly, those related with no-waste policy (circular economy) and integrated land use and management. The identification of RE sources and their integration must not be seen as a stand-alone enterprise but needs to be holistic in understanding other services that come with it (e.g. in biogas applications the bio-slurry management requires training also on crop production and livestock raising/fattening, vaccine services and zero-grazing models).

Innovative and locally fabricated solutions for RE integration should be fostered, e.g., parts of bio-digesters, solar dryers for specific products like cassava chips, and solar water irrigation systems. More, the use of ICT in the services sector for renewable energy can be an attractive option for youth who might not be willing to venture in agriculture but provide the support services (sales and management)

In 2023, each country, will need to update and refine the list/inventory of RET to be installed for upgrading the hub/satellite facilities. This must be reflected in the AWPB and procurement plan 2023.

Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). A template for a country based GRM was developed in consultation with agrihubs active in the first semester of the year. The mechanism now constitutes an integral part of the project's management system for beneficiaries to use if and when necessary for project related complaints and grievances.

3.2 Detailed Progress by Country

This section presents updated tables, per country, first shared in the 2021 Annual Report. The information contained herein reflects the dynamic and developmental and learning nature of the Agribusiness Hub Programme. Similar updates will be provided on an annual basis.

NIGERIA			
KEY INFORMATION			
Partnering Host	International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)	Project Launch	January 2020
Partner Organizations	Africa Project Development Centre (APDC) and State Governments.		
Hubs and Satellites	Hubs are in Oyo and Imo States, and Abuja.		
Target Area	Concentrates in the states in which the hubs are located, although its scope is not limited rigidly to these.		
Target Age Group	18-29	Target Commodities	Aquaculture, poultry, snailery, green house vegetable production, cassava, livestock, oil palm and cassava processing, biogas, market garden, piggery, and mushroom.
N. of Beneficiaries	Direct beneficiaries: 2,200 (1,540 wage employment and 660 entrepreneurship) Indirect beneficiaries: 3,300		
PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES			
The hubs are managed by IITA in Oyo and Imo States and the Africa Projects Development Centre in Abuja. The initial participation of Songhai will be limited beyond the first cohort of youth targeted. The programme in Nigeria promotes three different approaches: (i) urban farming (in Abuja); (ii) zero waste integrated organic farm enterprises (in Imo); and (iii) innovative value chain systems (in Oyo). Each of the hubs offers theoretical and practical exposure in a wide range of value chains through a dual training approach. These integrated agribusiness hubs offer capacity-building, training, and mentoring services to participating youth. The hubs are multi-functional sites using integrated production systems offering agro-industrial opportunities for value addition, facilitating linkages with employers and business associations, other projects and communities. Approach. The programme in Nigeria takes youth through a cycle of mentorship that includes training, internship / apprenticeship, which was initially designed to last 10-14 weeks. Week 1 is for intensive orientation. Experience in the first cohort of youth onboarded in Nigeria pointed to the need to increase practical skills building for youth following the wage employment track to increase employability potential and respond to the demand of potential employers as well as reduce the reliance on existing match making players. The recently conducted MTR found that work placements in the dual training approach offered to youth following the self-employment pathway, the type of exposure and thus skills development opportunities conferred by each of the participating industry players varies according to the type of business they are engaged in. An interesting finding from the MTR for Nigeria is that youth seconded to a private sector player in Imo State included dialogue between targeted youth and potential industry clients, which was found to increase youth understanding of what the market needs in terms of products and services. Youth participating in the work placements in that specific industry player stated being highly equipped to develop micro businesses that respond to what is needed rather than merely replicate what they considered to be good opportunities based on what they observe around them. As a result, IITA adopted a two-pronged approach for the 2nd cohort of youth whereby those following the wage employment track undergo a brief induction followed by a direct work placement in partner private sector players. While the strategy appears to hold the potential of being effective in providing comprehensive exposure to youth of different aspects of these businesses and increasing their skills, it requires substantial engagement from the PH to continuously identify partners willing to onboard small groups of approximately 20 youth for the internship, of which a small proportion could be absorbed as employees.			
An IFAD supervision mission in November 2021 found that the consortium partners (Songhai, APDC and IITA) were operating in a somewhat disjointed manner, whereby each entity is implementing its own hub approach rather than adopting a coherent pathway offering synergies. This was not optimizing the resources of			

common ecosystem approach. Moreover, both the mission and the MTR found communication gaps resulting in beneficiaries reporting varied understandings on what the program is offering, concretely thinking that the project would provide access to finance. This had implications in the recruitment of youth as most of them took the self-employment track. The hubs have altered their communication outreach strategy to explicitly communicate the programme approach clarifying its role of facilitating access to financing partners, as available.

The project is working with GIZ to develop a joint work plan between the IFAD Agrihub Nigeria project and GIZ SKYE³ project to commence collaboration in the second year annual work plan and budget before end of this year. In addition, GIZ SKYE project will work with the hub to build technical capacity of the Agrihub project staff and other key stakeholders in wage employment interventions sustainable for Nigeria.

Pre-hub preparatory arrangements. All required studies were conducted in 2020 and were used to fine tune operational approaches, training curriculum, the mentorship modules for work-based learning, business incubation and accelerations, as well as to inform necessary hub upgrading investments.

Hub upgrading investments included enterprises or value chain development, recruitment of relevant hub technicians, development and review of training curriculum, modules and manuals, soft and hardware infrastructure development, establishment of partnerships with private and public sector stakeholders, etc.

Project efforts in recruiting stakeholders devoted to linking employers and candidates in Nigeria have not been as effective as desired, as confirmed by the MTR. To address this, the project has coupled this function with the need to increase the duration of youth's work-based exposure during the upskilling process by identifying companies that will take groups of youth for a period of approximately 3 months. Given that companies accepting to do this are in the process of expansion as thus need additional staff, the entity providing the apprenticeship keeps some of the youth upon conclusion of the apprenticeship and provides assistance, as possible, to try to place the youth in associated businesses.

Also, avenues are being sought with IFAD's ICO to strengthen linkages between the agribusiness hub and existing sovereign programmes. For instance, the Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP), the Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises Project in the Niger Delta of Nigeria (LIFE-ND), along with IFAD's first non-sovereign lending operation (NSO) with *Babban Gona* are currently being leveraged as part of its pre-hub ecosystem engagement to leverage private sector actors and the hubs. Lessons will also be captured from the experience of the IFAD YEASA grant in Benin and Nigeria.

A total of 103 partnerships have been forged with a wide array of entities in the Nigeria Hub to date; this is expected to continue growing over the life of the project, especially with the entry of more and more potential employers to ensure the ecosystem continues remaining relevant both to unemployed youth and industry players.

Hub-nurturing. The first call for applications from youth was launched in 2021. This call received over 54,000 applications for both wage and self-employment tracks. The programme in Nigeria tested and ran the tools to be used in each of the hub systems and targeted 256 youth. Of these, 57% have successfully employed (38% followed the wage employment and 62% the self-employment track).

A total of 542 youth have been onboarded to date in the Nigeria hubs; the second cohort of youth was onboarded in September 2022 following the revised and distinctive upskilling approaches now employed in the Nigeria hub.

Social inclusion criteria were considered to reach under-resourced rural youth of different ages. Gender considerations have not only considered targeting female youth but also catering to their needs in terms of accommodation when they participate in the internship or apprenticeship process with their young children,

³ This SKYE project supports the company (private sectors) in terms of affordable salary rates and provide job experience for the candidates to be profiled further for high earning jobs.

supporting female youth opting for opportunities generally preferred by them, etc. Also, future cohorts in Nigeria intend to also include youth who have lost jobs and need new skills to enter the job market. The agribusiness hubs will offer them shorter programmes for them to remain relevant to the job market and access employment in a context of evolving skillsets.

Efforts will continue being made in try identify opportunities for PWDs. To this end, the project will use a targeted communication for this audience in communities where GIZ and IFAD projects are being implemented within the agribusiness hubs are located, and also partner with government empowerment programs for PWDs.

Recent targeting of education / training facilities for large scale kidnappings in Nigeria has created important security concerns for the agribusiness hubs. A risk reduction measure adopted by the project with the first cohort was choosing two-thirds of beneficiaries from the vicinities of the agrihubs to avoid having to provide boarding. Only one third of youth targeted will now come from locations outside of each agrihub's catchment areas and will be provided with boarding, as necessary.

The programme in Nigeria engaged in discussions this year to set up of business clusters. Of specific interest to date have been the potential establishment of agribusiness parks, as well as looking into issues of registration and standards, etc. Participation in career and job fairs, agro-pluggins and agri-pitches have highlighted the need to broaden the stakeholder ecosystem base. During the reporting period the programme has learned that to address employment gaps in relevant private sector industries requires continuous dialogue.

Efforts have also been invested in greening the hubs in Nigeria. In 2021, a desk study of relevant documents has informed a round of direct (on-line) consultations with key stakeholders. The draft findings of the review were discussed with programme staff and IFAD management. A staff training workshop has been agreed with the exact date soon be confirmed. There is ample scope for progressively "greening" the integrated hub approach towards youth employment. The Programme in Nigeria has embraced such an approach, working with lead institutions for sustainable, climate-resilient agriculture. Also, through the project partnership with GIZ, there would be a capacity and need assessment for hub technicians and company instructors which would lead to a certified training from registered and licensed institutions with the ability to train on the identified gaps

In 2022, the programme implemented the recommendations of the review, including working with selected "green" enterprises, greening skills development programmes and building the evidence and advocacy for green jobs creation through the hubs.

Opportunities have also expressed interest in integrating renewable / clean energy in the agrihubs, with the use of the following technologies: solar, biogas, bio-fertilizer, bio-slurry, local technology construction (charcoal cold room), fabrication and mechanization. Service provider mapped include:

- Ashdam Solar, which also runs the Ashdam Solar Academy, a subsidiary of the company aimed at developing skilled entrepreneurs and engineers to expand the market for solar energy – incubated 30 youth.
- Palm Tree, a solar energy company involved in the production of solar application systems like farm ovens/dryers, solar generators, power banks, and solar stoves. Palmtree is a facilitator for NYSC Oyo State on solar and CCTV installation, and has organized seminars, conferences, and trainings on solar energy. Palmtree technology services is a member of the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), and partners with the Bank of Industry (BOI) to facilitate small loans and start up loans for trained youth on renewable energy (solar) – to date, incubated 50 youth.
- Y-SWEP is a youth initiative program of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) that addresses waste management through a circular economy approach. Y-SWEP has been involved in awareness creation on waste management and construction of biodigesters. At IITA, one biogas unit has been constructed.
- Gycon focuses on green and renewable solutions, and encouraging sustainability via biogas technology. Their main activities are in supporting the training of youth on construction, management and production of biogas.

In 2023, Assess linkages around renewable energy potential with the GIZ SKYE project and IFAD LIFE-ND in Nigeria. The main areas include:

- Biogas construction, operation and maintenance
- Modifying diesel engines to run on clean energy or hybrid biogas systems
- Operation and construction of small-scale processing machinery (grinders, chaff cutters)
- Biogas-waste management models for village sanitation
- Organic farming through Bioslurry production (we need youths to get into regenerative farming practices)
- Biogas milk pasteurizer / yogurt making
- Fruit drying / Juice processing

Nutrition has been mainstreamed in the hubs by including growing and promoting the cultivation of orange flesh sweet potato, vitamin A cassava, sweet corn, pro-vitamin A maize and high nutrition value vegetables.

RWANDA			
KEY INFORMATION			
Partnering Host	Kilimo Trust		Project Launch July 2020
Partner Organizations	Rwanda Polytechnics and its four colleges in Musanze, Gishari, Kigali and Huye; the Rwanda Youth in Agriculture Forum (RYAF); Business Development Fund (BDF), Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Board (RAB), Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA), and the Gender Monitoring Office.		
Hubs and Satellites	A total of six sites using four Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges - IPRC (Musanze, Gishari, Kigali and Huye), two technical and vocational education and training schools – TVETs (Sina Gerald and Kavumu), and 34 selected agribusiness companies as entry points.		
Target Area	16 districts including: (i) North (Gicumbi, Rulindo, and Musanze), (ii) West (Nyabihu, Rubavu, and Rusizi), (iii) South (Nyanza, Ruhango, Gisagara, Kamonyi and Huye), and (iv) East (Nyagatare, Kayanza, Rwamagana, Ngoma and Bugesera).		
Target Age Group	18-30	Target Commodities	Dairy, Poultry, Piggery, Potatoes, Maize, Rice, and Vegetables (Tomatoes, Onions, Cabbage, Carrots, Chilli, Green pepper, and French beans).
N. of Beneficiaries	Direct beneficiaries: 1,200 (840 wage employment and 360 entrepreneurship) Indirect beneficiaries: 1,800		
PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES			
For this project, Kilimo Trust forged a partnership with the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) and Rwanda Polytechnic (RP) - with IPRCs, TVETs, and agribusiness industries as centers of training. Approach. The programme in Rwanda uses six training institutions as the entry point for youth, namely, four IPRCs (Musanze, Huye, Gishari and Kigali IPRCs) and two TVETs (Sina Gerald and Kavumu TVET Schools). Selected youth participate in specifically developed training courses developed specifically to upskill youth for employment. A total of 66 modules were produced in 10 value chains. The trainings offered include a softskills workplace communications module. Those opting for self-employment receive specific training to equip them with the necessary skills to produce a bankable business proposals to start their businesses. Additional support is provided to those with the best proposals to help them set up their micro businesses. Linkages with financial institutions plays a crucial role for youth to meet start-up capital requirements and non-traditional pathways of accessing finance such as crowdfunding, equity financing, impact and angel investments, peer to peer leading etc. are been pursued. Once the business is established, supported entrepreneurs receive mentoring support. Youth opting for self and wage employment will be mentored by IPRCs, TVETs, and business associations and enterprises / employers, as well as employment and business development service providers. The entire mentorship process ranges from three months to three years or more/less, and blends theoretical and practical elements which can contain actual training, internships and apprenticeships. Pre-hub preparatory arrangements. All required studies were conducted in 2020 and were used to fine tune operational approaches, training curriculum, the mentorship modules for work-based learning, business incubation and accelerations, as well as to inform necessary hub upgrading investments. COVID-19 restrictions in Rwanda included the closure of partner colleges in the first year of operations making it impossible for necessary upgrades to be made. Key upgrading investments include renovating and equipping training facilities (workshops, processing units, farms, etc.) in accordance with allocated courses and number of youths to be trained and reskilling and upskilling of training institutions instructors. Linkages have been made with industry employers; employment service providers; business development service providers; and financial institutions. A total of 41 partnership agreements have been signed with public and private sector players.			

The project signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to guide implementation of agreed actions with Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) and the Rwanda Single Programme Implementation Unit, a unit under Government oversight responsible for the implementation and monitoring of IFAD loan supported programmes. In addition, the hub established partnerships with the Business Development Fund, Green Agribusiness Fund and the Green Fund, private firms as well as pipeline partnership with the Skills Development Fund to leverage financial and human resources. The partnerships will enable youth requiring extra support from the Rwanda Dairy Development Project (RDDP), Kayonza Irrigation and Integrated Watershed Management Project (KIIWP), and Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Small Livestock (PRISM) to access agruhub opportunities.

The project also held fruitful discussions with selected GIZ programs to learn from their approach and identified potential areas of collaboration, including (i) the Promotion of green economy and employment in Rwanda; and (ii) GIZ's Digital Transformation Center. In the latter, in fact, an opportunity was identified to build on gains achieved under Make-IT project to help commercialise Tech Start-ups initiated in agribusiness under the agribusiness project.

Following discussions from implementation support missions and the programme's MTR, the Rwanda Hub is actively strategizing at present to continue expanding the integration of progressively more potential employers from targeted value chains and adjacent sectors. Partnerships are in fact expected to continue growing all throughout project operations, even beyond the initial target areas – this is key to ensure that as many opportunities as possible are availed for youth employment.

Hub-nurturing. A call for applications closed in July 2021 resulting in screening, evaluation and selection of the first cohorts of youth in line with the targeting strategy. Hub mentorship of the first cohort took place in 2022. Another cohort of youth in similar number and proportion is scheduled to commence in January 2023. The project adopted a socially inclusive approach warranting the participation of under-resourced youth. The project already considers applicants living with disabilities and so far three (two females and one male) youth have been directly placed in the industry as interns with 100% hope to be absorbed as full-time staff in the second or third month of their internship. Additional measures to be adopted include contacting associations representing PWDs to disseminate information about the project to increase the possibility of households including a person with disability knowing about the project and considering applying.

In Rwanda, 354 young people have been supported to date through one cohort of beneficiaries. Upskilling has followed a dual skills development approach involving: (i) Access to intensive classroom-based learning; combined with practical workshop-based training, both provided in partner training institutions (Integrated Professional and Research Colleges (IPRCs) and Technical and Vocational Education Training Institutes (TVETs) over a period of 2-3 months; and (ii) Industry attachment in relevant industry players for a period of one month. Having concluded this two-phased approach youth “graduate” from the hub and transition to the post-hub nurturing phase. A total of 137 youth have secured employment (62% through wage employment while 38% youth started their own agribusinesses).

The approach considered with the first cohort in Rwanda sought to make the best use possible of funds available seeking for internships to lead to wage employment. However, the experience with the 1st cohort has highlighted that while youth have more skills at times that the employees of the industries offering the internships which can result in absorption in the same industry player, a period of exposure of only one month at industry level may be too short for employers to offer jobs to all the youth engaged.

The Rwanda hub will be assessing how to best address the challenge of exposing youth to industry players for longer periods of time (longer than the current month internship contemplated to date in the dual training approach). This could include making the internship period longer, and / or finding cost-effective solutions to supporting internships and apprenticeships for youth, including skilled youth who may not need formal

Picture 2: Milk processing class in Rwanda.



training per se, but who need exposure and minimal upgrading of skills in the industry of their choice. Also, the PH in Rwanda will start working in coming months on the development of a sustainability strategy, which includes aspects related to the institutionalization of the ecosystems approach adopted by the country hub. This could involve ascertaining policy entry points and others.

Kilimo Trust's partnership with Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) seeks to support project performance in mainstreaming gender considerations at all levels of the agribusiness hub programme in Rwanda. Collaboration between the two agencies is expected to start in coming months.

Kilimo has actively invested to assess opportunities to green the hubs. In 2021, a desk study of relevant documents has informed a round of direct (on-line) consultations with key stakeholders. The draft findings of the review were discussed with programme staff and IFAD management. A staff online training workshop took place at the end of the year. As a result of sensitization by the project, an increased adoption of regenerative agricultural production practices is observed, especially among youth in vegetable production businesses and fodder production for cattle during the dry season (recycling agricultural produce). The hub has set up a solar powered irrigation dam in one of the technical training centers to create awareness on green production practices a part of trainings offered.

Also, there has been increasing adoption of regenerative agricultural production practices especially with youth in vegetable production businesses. Youth under fodder production also seems to be doing sustainable business because this helps to feed cattle during dry season. The hub also set up a solar powered irrigation dam in one of the technical training centers to create awareness on renewable energy and green production practices a part of trainings offered in the hub.

The Rwanda hub has dedicated substantial effort as well to sharing information about the project, using radio, TV, news articles, podcasts, flyers, you tube videos and other social media platforms. These efforts have contributed to giving more visibility to the challenge of rural youth employment, showcasing the agribusiness' innovations to address this and taken, in so doing, the issue to the public dialogue platform.

KENYA			
KEY INFORMATION			
Partnering Host	PROCASUR		Project Launch September 2021
Partner Organizations	USTADI; CoELIB Egerton University; Pwani University; Shamberere Institute; and ILO Kenya.		
Hubs and Satellites	Main hub: Nakuru; satellites: Kakamega and Kilifi		
Target Area	Counties where hub and satellites are located: Nakuru, Kakamega and Kilifi and adjacent counties, and possibly other counties targeted by GIZ, ILO and IFAD projects.		
Target Age Group	18-34	Target Commodities	Fresh vegetables, fruits, dairy, cassava, fisheries, groundnuts, livestock, green grams and poultry.
N. of Beneficiaries	Direct beneficiaries: 1,250 (875 wage employment and 375 entrepreneurship) Indirect beneficiaries: 1,875		
PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES			
PROCASUR formed a consortium with USTADI (as lead agency in country), CoELIB (main hub in Nakuru), Pwani University (in charge of satellite site in Kilifi County), Shamberere Institute (in charge of satellite site in Kakamega) and ILO Kenya. Approach. The training institutions involved and industry sector players to be identified in the programme constitute, at present the main entry points for project beneficiaries. Participating youth are offered mentorship opportunities in the occupations of their choice associated with the value chain nodes selected by the project. For those requiring actual trainings will last approximately 12 weeks. Youth will be asked to decide on the track of their preference during the application process and confirm their final decision in week two of the training. Those following the self-employment track will have access to basic business management training and linkages to financial institutions. It is expected that training not only concludes with the production of a bankable business plan but commencement of an enterprise or expansion of existing enterprises. Thus, the mentoring process would continue thereafter with placements as interns or apprentices and being absorbed by the industry as fulltime wage workers, and while setting up / expanding their enterprises. However, the programme in Kenya envisions that with time the hubs will evolve into an ecosystem that will offer different types of services to youth, catering to their specific needs. In light of this, the approach described above should be seen as flexible and branching out to also provide shorter ad hoc support services to target youth. Pre-hub preparatory arrangements. All necessary preparatory studies (value chain analysis, labour market assessment and institutional assessments) required for the programme were conducted. Hub upgrades were carried out and include: renewable energies capacities, digitalization of services, access to ICTs and re-skilling of staff, trainers and mentors. Also, curricula was revised and upgraded, as relevant, to address the skills needs of the labour market and skills mismatches of youth towards employment and entrepreneurship in project supported value chain nodes. Finally, 10 business models were developed for the following value chains (watermelon, fish, fresh vegetables, cereals, dairy, green grams, potatoes), which will inform start up and business acceleration efforts under the self-employment track. In Kenya, PROCASUR and USTADI have made important strides in establishing a landscape of potential opportunities for ecosystem development. This has been possible through numerous one to one engagements with private and public stakeholders as well as projects that JOY Kenya can benefit from. Of special interest beyond the entities implementing the project in the three target locations in which the project will be implemented are the linkages established with employer associations in the country, the upcoming MoU to be signed with GIZ (E4D, Aquaculture project and the Agrijobs4Youth project). The project has also held discussions with the Microenterprise Support Programme Trust to complement agribusiness hub greening efforts. Two learning routes (in Kakamega and Nakuru) involved various actors – private sector, small businesses, financial institutions, IFAD investments (ABDP, KeLCOP, KCEP-CRAL).			

Over 1,000 actors (government, farming community, private sector, civil society, financial institutions) have been sensitized on the JOY project through stakeholder sensitization meetings and social media. Some private sector organizations have expressed their willingness to absorb youth for internship and placement.

Arrangements with Cocovita, Renman Africa, and Flemibriqs enterprise are ongoing to make them part of the JOY project. These companies focus on sustainable production, zero waste policies, and are prone to on-board youths trained in the hubs in topics related to renewable energies.

The tracer study survey has been adopted by the hub and aims to determine the quality and appropriateness of the skills provided by training modules on renewable energy technologies and their performance in the workplace.

The KM material on renewable energy technologies (on biogas, solar animal feed grinder, solar dryer, solar water pump) were made available to the hub and reviewed by PROCASUR. These are now ready to be disseminated during the youth on-boarding stage as part of their training in the hubs.

In 2023, it is expected that Within the context of the JOY project, in Kenya, USTADI would like to engage more with the Micro Grid Academy (RES4Africa) especially on the development of the curriculum for the hubs they are currently working on (in relation to green jobs and renewable energy) and also on actual administration of some of the training modules. In 2023, provide support to leverage such opportunities for placement in the energy sector.

Hub-nurturing. The hub nurturing phase commenced in the last quarter of 2022. A total of 110 youth with varied education levels have been placed directly in industries through internships and apprenticeships. Curricula developed is about to be tested and youth will be onboarded in January.

Overall, there is a significant amount of interest in green approaches across the program in Kenya. Training on green jobs and skills was scheduled *in situ* for in December 2022, whilst another “Learning Route” is planned for December 2022, with online support. This reflects the adoption, by the satellite institutions, of the integration of green skills development in their training offer, as agreed in the action plan.

A number of male-owned and female-owned green enterprises, mainly startups, are connected to the project. There are initiatives by the training institutions to integrate green skills in their training programs albeit with several capacity challenges. Based on this knowledge, recommendations have been provided to generate more short-term and mid-term green employment outcomes.

Options to consolidate the project’s interest in mainstreaming nutrition considered to date include discussions with industry players the project interacts with on the benefits of nutritionally rich food products, as well as youth following the self-employment pathway. Nutrition has also been integrated in the curricula developed for the training sessions in training institutions.

CAMEROON				
KEY INFORMATION				
Partnering Host	PROCASUR		Project Launch	September 2021
Partner Organizations	AGROPME (lead Agency in country) Training centres: Centre D’insertion Des Metiers Agricole Et Ruraux – CIMAR Technopole (main hub); Nlonako Valley SCI. (NVA-SCI); Centre de Formation Professionnelle Agropastoral Duca de Souza (CFPAD); École Technique d’Agriculture (ETA DIBOMBARI); CIBAAM; Centre de Formation Professionnelle des Jeunes (CFPJ DE BARE); CIP and ILO Cameroon. Liaison offices / job placement centres: Nkonssamba Liaison Office (ISMAM headquarters) ; Njombe Liaison Office (CIMAR Technopole) ; Bonaberie Liaison Office (CAMWERTER) ; and Yaoundé Liaison Office (Mimboman).			
Hubs and Satellites	Njombe, plus satellites in Nkonssamba, Bare Bakem, Bonaberie, Souza, Dibombari and Yaoundé.			
Target Area	Agrihub locations and vicinities, namely: Santchou, Melong, Bare Bakem, Nkongsamba I, II and III, Nlonako, Manjo, Loum, Njombe-Penja, Mombo, Mbanga, Fiko, Dibombari and Bonaberie.			
Target Age Group	18-35	Target Commodities	Cassava, maize, plantain, horticulture, ginger, palm oil, tree pepper, cocoa, poultry, and piggery.	
N. of Beneficiaries	Direct beneficiaries: 1,250 (875 wage employment and 375 entrepreneurship) Indirect beneficiaries: 1,875			
PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES				
PROCASUR established a consortium with AGRO PME as the lead implementing agency in country, CIMAR TECHNOPOLE, the 6 training institutions located in Muongo Region, and ILO Cameroon. Approach. The Lead Agency and its implementing partners critically revised its initial project proposal and refined on the basis of the results of the preliminary studies, technical guidance from the IFAD team and specialised employment training organized the programme for the in-country team. First, the revised approach places its focus on wage employment, interactions and partnerships with players supporting or needing wage employment and those supporting self-employment for the project to pursue the business acceleration option. The approach adopted in Cameroon employs existing structures (National Employment Fund database and a flexible approach and collaborates with the many projects supporting entrepreneurship and is in the process of forging partnerships with financial service providers. Youth will be asked to decide on the track of their preference during the application process. Youth are placed as interns / apprentices directly in the industry with the aim of being absorbed by the industry as full-time wage workers. Those following the self-employment track will have access to basic business management training and linkages to financial institutions. It is expected that mentorship will continue after the production of a bankable business plan for business acceleration.				
Pre-hub preparatory arrangements. All necessary preparatory studies (value chain analysis, labour market assessment and institutional assessments) required for the programme have been conducted. Hub upgrades were carried out; key improvements progressively being integrated include: strengthening green job and renewable energies promotion / support capacity, digitalization of services, access to ICTs. Also, curricula have been revised and upgraded, as relevant, to address the skills needs of the labour market and skills mismatches between the reality of youth and employment and entrepreneurship requirements, in project supported value chains. During the phase the agribusiness hubs programme in Cameroon started looking into opportunities to green the hubs. A desk study of relevant programme documents and country reports have clarified the context in which the programme operates in each country. Presentations of the objectives and methods of the review were presented in the start-up workshops (on-line). ToRs for studies, job descriptions and annual workplans have been adjusted to reflect a greener approach. Meetings to guide the programme staff have taken place. So far considerable interest has been voiced by the country team to adopt an approaches towards green jobs and enterprises. Encouraging progress has been made in identifying at least nine green companies that could provide employment opportunities for rural youth. Regular and fruitful dialogue has also taken place between				

the team and the renewable energies specialist, resulting in (i) the identification of RE trainers; (ii) production of survey to identify potential partners; (iii) data sheets with key info on potential partners; (iv) documenting proposal for the integration of RE in business acceleration activities; (v) Planning a start-up innovation course for youth.

The integration of RE has also merited attention in the reporting period. the potential wastes available in the Mungo that could be used to produce bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides, compost, biochar, paving stones, and biogas were identified and transmitted to the University of Dschang for analysis. Main outputs:

- i. With lead support from Procasur, developed a list of trainers specialized in renewable energies and green jobs committed with the train of trainers program for the youths that include name, area of experience, and contact information.
- ii. Implementation of a survey focused on evidencing the opportunities of partnership with three companies (focused on sustainable production, e.g., plastic waste management) with the JOY project.
- iii. Datasheet of different companies visited that are working in renewable energies, green jobs generation, and in general in sustainable production (three in total). The datasheet includes the potential of each company, the collaboration areas with the JOY project, and the target skills they are looking for in the coming recruitments.
- iv. Document the proposal for the acceleration path for companies and the curriculum proposal for training mentoring advisors in the agro-pastoral (cocoa, pepper, horticulture, oil palm, cassava, maize, plantain, ginger, market gardening, poultry, pig and fish farming) and agro-industry (eco-activities -recycling of agro-industrial waste, water treatment and access, bio fertilizers, biopesticides), renewable energies, transport, logistics, hotels and restaurants and the digital services) sector. The partner for implementing the acceleration program is the Hub AB.
- v. Planning a start-up innovation course for youths. The course aims to enable young entrepreneurs to ensure the development of their business through innovations that will contribute to the diversification or strengthening of their activities.

Like Kenya, the Cameroon hubs will integrate nutrition by lobbying among private sector food producers on the benefits of nutritionally rich products, and encourage youth following the entrepreneurship track to be nutrition sensitive.

Hub-nurturing. The Cameroon Hub is starting to target youth already, following an intensive period of direct sensitization with stakeholders in the project area (Yaoundé, Doualá and the rural areas of Muongo Region). The partnership with the National Employment Fund allows youth registered already in their database to be considered as potential beneficiaries of the project, along with those registering in any of the satellites or liaison offices participating in the programme. To date, a total of 21 youth were linked directly into employment and six accessed apprenticeships through project

MOZAMBIQUE				
KEY INFORMATION				
Partnering Host	Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor (BAGC)		Project Launch	October 2021
Partner Organizations		Instituto Agrario de Chimoio (IAC); and Instituto de Promoção da Pequena e Media Empresa (IPEME).		
Hubs and Satellites	Chimoio City			
Target Area	Provinces of Manica, Tete and Sofala.			
Target Age Group	18-35	Target Commodities	Horticulture, aquaculture, poultry, piggery and sesame.	
N. of Beneficiaries	Direct beneficiaries: 1,200 (600 wage employment and 600 entrepreneurship) Indirect beneficiaries: 3,000			
PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES				
BAGC created a consortium with IPEME and IAC, agencies that respectively lead the promotion of small and medium enterprises and agricultural training in the target area.				
Approach. The training institution involved and industry players to be identified in the programme constitute, at present the main entry point for project beneficiaries. Participating youth will be offered mentorship opportunities in the occupations of their choice associated with the value chain nodes selected by the project. The entire mentoring process will be comprised of theoretical and practical hands-on experience. Participating youth without higher education will undergo training in partner institutions. Youth will be asked to decide on the track of their preference at admission. Those wanting to pursue the wage employment track will be place in companies as interns or in definite conditions. Conversely, youth following the self-employment track will benefit from BDS and access to a start up kit to initiate the activity of their choice. Youth with higher education wishing to access wage employment opportunities will be placed directly in relevant industries. Mentorship will continue for all youth once accessing employment. The programme in Mozambique envisions that with time the hubs will evolve into an ecosystem that will offer different types of services to youth, catering to their specific needs. In light of this, the approach described above should be seen as flexible and branching out to also provide <i>ad hoc</i> services to youth. The Mozambique Hub is the only of the nine participating countries that has a ratio between wage and self employment different to the 70-30% ration adopted across the board. Mozambique adopted a 50-50% ratio. Between wage and self-employment given limited employment possibilities availed to rural youth. Pre-hub-preparatory arrangements. All necessary preparatory studies required for the programme were conducted. Hub upgrades carried out included up grading of livestock and horticultural production facilities at IAC. The Hub also developed specialised curriculum and corresponding training material, conducted a training of trainers - all of this under the guidance of specialised services. Finally, minor equipment needed for the smooth implementation of training activities was also purchased. BAGC in Mozambique has made substantial progress in reaching out to and establishing linkages with relevant players towards ecosystem building for youth employment in the Beira Corridor. This includes partnerships with formal MoUs with two training institutions (the Institute for Small and Medium Enterprises, IPEME, and the Agrarian Institute of Chimoio, IAC). Also, agreements on areas of exchange and learning have been established with a GIZ project promoting youth employment. Also, collaborations with the IFAD rural finance project (Rural Enterprise Financing Project, REFP) and the government EMPREGA project are expected to facilitate access to credit for youth opting for self-employment. Lastly, collaboration with the Zambeze Valley Development Agency is expected to facilitate access to best practices on technical and business development skills building for young entrepreneurs.				

Efforts in this phase have also included looking for opportunities to greening the hubs. A desk study of relevant programme documents and country reports carried out in 2021 clarified the context in which the programme operates in each country. Presentations of the objectives and methods of the review were presented in the start-up workshops (on-line). ToRs for studies, job descriptions and annual workplans have been adjusted to reflect a greener approach. Meetings to guide the programme staff have taken place in the reporting period. So far considerable interest has been voiced by each country programme staff to adopt an approach towards green jobs and enterprises. Results are expected to be borne in early 2023.

Hub-nurturing. A total of 692 applications were received in response to the call of applications of which 39% were received from female youth, already indicating how women lag behind in access to opportunities in the country, especially those leading to formal employment. 60% of applicants expressed their interest in self employment, which again is not surprising given the limited presence of private sector players in rural provinces.

Ninety youth were selected of which 87 proceeded to the training. In horticulture, poultry, piggery, and agro-processing.

The Mozambique hubs integrated the following nutrition mainstreaming and HIV/AIDS awareness as part of the induction provided to youth in the first two weeks of training. The activity was carried out with the involvement of Provincial representatives of the health authorities. Other pro-nutrition measures considered include promoting nutritionally laden food product making for youth undertaking processing activities under the self-employment track and promoting fortification (often done in Mozambique) as when necessary. Finally the tailor made training curricula includes aspects related to nutrition.

3.5. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

The establishment of the M&E system of the agribusiness hubs has been a focus during the reporting period. The programme team has defined monitoring standards that need to be fulfilled by all Agribusiness Hubs and developed a standardized M&E framework for the measurement of employment and income effects.

Employment definitions have been adapted to the two employment pathways that are being promoted by the hubs: wage employment, and self-employment / entrepreneurship promotion. The basis for the M&E framework is the understanding that the quality of jobs and underemployment are the main labour market challenge in rural settings in Africa. Standards for data collection for the agribusiness hubs include, therefore, also important dimensions of decent work, e.g., information on the type of job and income data.

Each agribusiness hub is setting up tracing systems to track the employment status of participating youth. The Agribusiness Hub in Nigeria is the one that is most advanced in terms of implementation and monitoring. The central monitoring tool is a tracking table that is accessible online and that includes all beneficiaries and where the employment status is updated on a regular basis. The IITA team has a dedicated monitoring officer that is conducting telephone interviews with beneficiaries every three months. The first beneficiaries of cohort 1 in Nigeria completed the short courses in December 2021 and three data collection cycles have been completed since then. The idea is that these calls do not only serve monitoring purposes, but that they are also used for the identification of phase III support needs of beneficiaries. The Hub in Rwanda, where beneficiaries completed their short courses between June and August 2022, has also started to follow-up with beneficiaries on an individual basis. It is planned for the next months to integrate the tracking system in an online networking platform that is being developed for the beneficiaries. In Cameroon, Kenya and Mozambique, beneficiaries have just started to be onboarded in the second half of 2022. The country teams are building on the experience from Nigeria and Rwanda and are developing their monitoring tools and processes.

A key milestone for 2022 was the completion of the mid-term review. The available quantitative data was analysed systematically for the MTR and the data has provided important insights and findings. A strength of the M&E system of the Agribusiness Hubs programme is the systematic collection of quantitative (employment) data on beneficiary level. A key recommendation from the MTR is a continuous systematic analysis of data, especially also looking at differences in employment rates of different sub-groups (e.g., technical trades, gender, age, education level). A regular data review that goes beyond the headline figures will be included in the implementation cycle to support data-driven strategy decision-making processes.

The focus for 2023 will be to further strengthen the monitoring system of the Agribusiness Hubs programme by harmonizing monitoring approaches in the different countries and by making use of synergies (e.g., sharing of monitoring data and tools). Digital data collection tools will be tested to improve data collection processes and data management. The Agribusiness Hubs programme will also take advantage of opportunities to further exchange with other programmes supported by organizations such as the World Bank, GIZ and ILO.

3.6. Communication and Knowledge Management

The programme has made significant progress towards Knowledge Management (KM) and communication.

This year, the programme participated in the Annual General Assembly (AGA) for the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (4 and 15 June 2022) to discuss evolving and emerging priorities. Among the key themes discussed is the rural youth employment in food systems. Also, the programme engaged in the AGRF summit from September 5 -9, 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda. The main objectives were to: (i) identify constraints and opportunities for boosting rural climate finance for small scale producers; (ii) assess the potential that climate finance, and particularly targeted at rural youth, has in contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation for smallholders; (iii) highlight the role and importance of climate smart technologies for climate adaptation and smallholder farmer resilience; (iv) demystify what climate finance is, what forms it can take, and the role that governments and development partners can play in increasing access/improving access to such finance; (v) discuss the role of climate financing towards catalysing bold climate technologies across the region that addresses smallholder farmer vulnerabilities and creates jobs for the youth at scale.

Participation in the AGRF 2022 Summit was highly successful in terms of increasing the programme's strategic and operational visibility through climate finance and creating employment opportunities for rural youth as well as sharing lessons.

Additionally, the programme participated in COP27 from 7 November 2022 - 18 November 2022. The event focused on harnessing the voices of rural youth and equipping them with the necessary skill-set to benefit from accessing green jobs. These platforms showcased the hubs operations and served as an opportunity to increase visibility for the agribusiness programme. Other opportunities will also be explored during the lifetime of the project.

The programme also engaged in the production of a number of podcast series on topical issues linked to agribusiness. (Please see links below to access the podcast).

The programme collaborated with the south-south and triangular cooperation - to share knowledge and lessons on youth employment. A video link can be seen below

A programme website, guidance notes are in the pipeline, including topics such as rural youth access to affordable finance, green jobs and enterprises, renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies accessible and friendly to youth etc.

The programme will disseminate the knowledge products and showcase programme operations on various platforms. In fact, examples of this are programme dissemination in podcasts, social media, IFAD's Annual Report, the Youth@heart campaign, Committee on World Food Security (CFS) side events, etc.).

- [Good Nutrition Better Lives, Focus on Africa - Episode 34](#)
- [Building Resilience in a Time of Famine – Episode 33 \(ifad.org\)](#)
- [Racking up Renewables in Africa - Episode 35](#)
- [Fighting Climate Change – Episode 36](#)
- <https://we.tl/t-RPF8B313HS>

In addition to these efforts, the hubs in Nigeria and Rwanda in particular have investment considerable efforts in making the hubs known, shared success stories, promoted dialogue and discussions around strategies to promote rural youth employment, etc. Channels used for this

purpose include social media (facebook, Instagram, twitter, you tube, podcasts) as well as traditional communication channels such as radio and television. Multiple banners, flyers and brochures have also been created and used / distributed among stakeholders the agribusiness hubs lead and implementing agencies interact with in the process of building the rural youth employment ecosystems.

4. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The programme has consolidated the management structures, systems and procedures for operations and country delivery, as follows during the reporting period.

Human resources. The core technical team established in PY1, continues to backstop the programme pooling multiple technical resources from across divisions and departments in IFAD, a technical working group has been established with members from IFADs Production, Markets and Institutions (PMI) division; and ECG division. The programme is also supported by IFAD's Legal and Finance Divisions. The IFAD management team that already consisted of an administrative assistant, a technical specialist on youth employment, five technical consultants to support the implementation of the programme in various specialized themes of green jobs; enterprises, renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies; gender and targeting; inclusive rural finance; Monitoring and Evaluation and general programme management support, was in the current reporting period strengthened with the recruitment of a consultant providing overall guidance and support in the domain of results-based monitoring and evaluation both at programme and hub level.

Equally important, management units have been established at country level outlining roles and responsibilities of implementation staff. Country level projects like Rwanda was provided with training to ensure compliance with procurement guidelines.

AWPBs. All country level hubs are well placed to manage all the activities included in their AWPBs. More, upcoming AWPBs will be strongly informed by experience to date with special emphasis to the findings and recommendations of the programme's MTR (for more information please refer to section 7).

IFAD follow up. Face to face engagement and field visits have resumed with the ease of international travel restrictions previously imposed in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. Implementation support missions have been carried out to four of the five countries which are operational (Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique and Rwanda). These interactions will continue and intensify, with the aim of reaching an average of two per programme year per country. The field visits have been instrumental in deepening technical discussions based on both IFAD and the hub teams better understanding the features shaping each context, especially for self-employment, and sharpening the focus in relation to self-employment by countries opting for supporting startups, business acceleration or both.

More, programme staff and technical specialists participated in the launch of the agribusiness hubs in Algeria, Ivory Coast, Madagascar and Malawi. This resulted in ensuring that PHs, implementing agencies and other key stakeholders in each context gained a solid understanding of IFAD's perspective towards the programme, its goals and approach.

The Programme MTR carried out in the third quarter of 2022 included field visits to Nigeria, Rwanda, and Mozambique, and included substantial interactions with a wide range of stakeholders participating in the programme. The MTR encompassed both quantitative and qualitative approaches with a detailed analysis of project data and the use of detailed interview guidelines. Interviews with beneficiaries were especially informative to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of targeted youth in terms of skills building and more importantly, on their expectations and experience in transitioning from upskilling activities into employment.

5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The financial systems developed in PY1 have been adopted in all hubs harmonizing all financial reporting. Financial management and reporting standard operating procedures have been developed with the nine country hubs.

During the reporting period, IFAD received a contribution of EUR 2 million from BMZ (100% of expected total for the year 2) and USD 583, 970 from the VISA Foundation (2nd tranche of funding). The report is accompanied by a Unaudited Donor Statement Report highlighting the status of funds as of 31st December 2022.

Table 6: Disbursements to agribusiness hubs per year and funding stream

Country and Recipient		BMZ GRANT (EUR)				VISA Foundation (USD)				IFAD GRANT (USD)			
	Total grant amount	Disbursed 2020	Disbursed 2021	Disbursed 2022	Spent to date	Total grant amount	Disbursed 2021	Spent to date	Total grant amount	Disbursed 2020	Disbursed 2021	Disbursed 2022	Spent to date
RWANDA: Kilimo Trust	299,000.00	108,319.50		28,159.00*	137,227.60				1,750,000.00	263,599.20	329,219.00	331,087**	618,554.00
NIGERIA: IITA	703,000.00	98,379.00		138,600.00	113,000.23				1,750,000.00	486,131.00	334,921.50		663,014.20
KENYA, CAMEROON: PROCASUR						2,500,000.00	911,797.00						
MOZAMBIQUE: BAGC	1,158,324.00		531,011.00										
IVORY COAST, MADAGASCAR, MALAWI: ILO	3,217,000.00			1,489,962	N/A								
ALGERIA: ILO	1,116,000.00			624,093.00	N/A								
TOTAL	6,493,324.00	206,698.50	531,011.00	2,280,814	250,227.83	2,500,000.00	911,797.00		3,500 000.00	749,730.2	664,140.5	331,087**	1,281,568.20

* Disbursement of EUR 38,275 in progress

** Disbursement of USD 331,087 in progress

6. LESSONS LEARNED

Key insights or lessons have been drawn from implementation of the programme to date, especially in Nigeria and Rwanda – but not exclusively - into what works and what has not worked as well as expected, which are highlighted in this section.

- **Ecosystem mapping and partnerships needs to start early and be effective for all ecosystem functions.** Early identification and involvement of key actors in the ecosystem towards partnership building for all key ecosystem functions early into the programme facilitates the transition of youth from upskilling processes to actual employment, in terms of youth access to industry attachments and other forms of work based learning programmes, matchmaking services; and access to finance. However, to remain relevant partnership building within the ecosystem needs continue beyond that initial phase primarily to integrate new potential employers to satisfy industry needs for skilled labor and youth employment.

Participating countries to date have found that partnership building requires substantial time and effort; there is room to identify more cost- efficient strategies to move quicker towards the achievement of results.

- **Geographic targeting needs to be wage employment focused and wider in scope than initially foreseen.** Experience to date indicates that not all initially identified target areas are the ones with the most wage employment potential is found for rural youth in the context not only of selected value chains but food systems to capture as many employment opportunities as possible. Also, economies can undergo substantial changes that block the development of employment potential. Countries will also need to assess if youth in their specific context would be willing to relocate for a medium skilled job away from social and support networks, where it will not be possible to give continuity to other income generating activities “back home”. These issues need to be considered when determining the geographic target are of agribusiness hubs to maximize the possibility of impact on rural youth.
- **Ecosystems for rural youth employment provide solutions to the under and unemployment challenges of medium skilled youth.** The MTR found that youth with medium skills are the ones with the highest access to employment thus far in programme supported ecosystems. Experience to date appears to indicate that in target countries, most of which have low human development levels the type of short-term upskilling services provided may not be able to make up for the education gap faced by lower skilled youth (youth who have not made substantial progress in secondary education); these youth may require more lengthy and thus more costly solutions which are beyond of the scope of this programme.

Through the programme, middle skilled youth are finding opportunities to transition from underemployment, unemployment and poverty to more profitable livelihood activities. Even with the short-term data available for the programme, the MTR indicates that the human and social capital of targeted youth increases through participation in the programme, and that for those who have already found employment opportunities the income can increase threefold.

- **Difficulties in rural youth access to financial services hinders development of youth enterprises.** The programme has encountered difficulties in all participating countries in identifying partners who can provide financial services (more concretely credit) to rural youth. Most of the youth participating in the programme were engaged in some form of informal production, transformation, trade or service provision activity – even if in very limited scale and not on a full time or continuous basis. Some of the youth trained want to take existing activities to a larger scale to become commercially oriented after finalising the upskilling process. Others identify new market opportunities they would like to explore.

However, financial institutions consider the profile of youth targeted as risky clients which has limited access to financing among targeted youth. Confined to the very limited funding available to them through their networks (family and friends) youth microbusinesses can only anticipate short term limited improvements in production, productivity, yields, quality, and market access or in the provision of a service (such as whatsapp based technical assistance) but face frank limitations in the growth of their businesses. While these improvements can increase their yields and income it does not entail the leap anticipated by youth.

As expected, specific sub-segments of youth are easier to reach than others. The programme was built on the premise of being socially inclusive, providing opportunities to younger and older youth, male and female, and identifying opportunities when possible for youth with disabilities. While participating countries have established quotas for female participation (50% ratio) and younger youth (variable and identified by each country team), experience in the first half of the programme confirms that older youth are easier to reach and that outcomes are slightly better among male participants.

Greater attention will need to be placed in actually integrating measures considered into practice and understanding barriers yet unidentified to overcome entry and performance barriers limiting the access of younger youth and the success of female youth in accessing employment.

7. NEXT STEPS & KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2023

In the remaining months of 2022, the programme will consolidate ecosystems and expand outreach in Rwanda and Nigeria, start / continue on-boarding and ecosystem building in Cameroon, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Madagascar, Ivory Coast and Algeria. In addition to the below key activities the programme has developed a 6 months action plan addressing recommendations from the Mid Term Review. The action plan attached as annex 3.



Action Plan 4 ABH
MTR Feedback (002).x

Table 7: Key activities to be implemented in 2023

Key Activities	Target Deadline	Country	Responsible
2.Calls for applications for youth / selection process	Q1 2023 (3 rd Cohort)	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
	Q1 2023 (2 nd cohort)	Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC
	Q1 2023 (1 st cohort)	Malawi, Madagascar, Ivory Coast & Algeria	ILO
	Q1 2023 (1 st cohort)	Algeria	ILO
3 Mentorship of youth (skills development) for wage employment	Continues	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
		Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC
		Malawi, Madagascar and Ivory Coast	ILO
		Algeria	ILO
4. Job linkages & placements	Continues	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
		Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC
		Malawi, Madagascar and Ivory Coast	ILO
		Algeria	ILO
5. Mentorship of youth (enterprise development) for self-employment	Continues	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
		Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC
		Malawi, Madagascar and Ivory Coast	ILO
		Algeria	ILO
6. Green enterprises, adoption of renewable energy solutions and ICT (e-commerce)	Continues	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
		Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC

		Malawi, Madagascar and Ivory Coast	ILO
		Algeria	ILO
7. Business capital mobilization strategies, practical sources of finances and partnership opportunities (joint ventures, franchise etc.)	Continues	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
		Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC
		Malawi, Madagascar and Ivory Coast	ILO
		Algeria	ILO
8. Market intelligence & information gathering	Continues	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
		Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC
		Malawi, Madagascar and Ivory Coast	ILO
		Algeria	ILO
9. Linkages to business development services providers for business start-ups and expansion	Continues	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
		Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC
		Malawi, Madagascar and Ivory Coast	ILO
		Algeria	ILO
10. Orientation training for college/agri-hub mentors and business incubator managers	Completed	Nigeria and Rwanda	IITA and KT
	Q1 2023	Kenya, Cameroon and Mozambique	PROCASUR and BAGC
	Q1 2023	Malawi, Madagascar and Ivory Coast	ILO
	Q1 2023	Algeria	ILO
11. Knowledge products to be developed and disseminated	Continuous	All countries	IFAD/PHs
12. Development of sustainability strategies for institutionalization	Q3/4 2023	All countries	IFAD/PHs

Experience to date highlights the need for the programme to continue dedicating attention to the following issues in 2023.

- **Continuing to strengthen PH and IP capacity:** The programme will identify and tap into existing expertise in target countries to address PH and IP capacity building needs, especially around wage employment, with specific attention on:

- **Reviewing / consolidating core project strategies** towards facilitating access to wage and self-employment in line with opportunities and challenges faced in each country. This includes determining the value chains and adjacent sectors of focus, the specific skills demands of the labour market, and whether self-employment is to be supported through start ups and / or business acceleration.
- **Developing approaches that consider the dynamic nature of labour markets and the need for processes to systematically and continuously identify employment opportunities.** IFAD will closely monitor capacity gaps that could exist and provide one to one support through monthly calls, specific thematic calls, implementation support and supervision missions and facilitating access to specialized training if needed.
- **Finding cost effective solutions to streamline partnership building and work-based training opportunities at the scale needed by the agribusiness hubs.** More cost-effective models for internships and industrial attachments need to be found for the ecosystem to be responsive to the scale of the need to expose youth to industry players.
- **Developing viable and replicable business models** that youth can apply their skills in.
- **Streamlining support towards self-employment** during and after the upskilling process integrating business management, financial literacy, technical know how as well as market intelligence and marketing.
- **Greening jobs and integrating renewable energies:** IFAD specialists will continue providing the necessary capacity building support and technical assistance for each country to explore all possibilities of greening the hubs and facilitating access to green finance.
- **Propelling learning between participating countries:** IFAD will facilitate technical online workshops for country teams to share experiences and discuss operational strategies used by the different country teams and brainstorm about other potential options that could be explored to increase the cost-effectiveness of the ecosystem models under development.
- **Targeting:** IFAD will work with the five countries that are active to reflect and explore any necessary improvements in their targeting strategy. This includes issues related to geographic targeting, fine tuning the profile of youth likely to be best served in each country according to skills level (low, medium, high skilled), yet ensuring that younger youth are targeted (or other harder to reach youth within the skills level category deemed most adequate in the context), as well as assessing and overcoming barriers hindering the slightly lower outcomes to date among female youth. The same support will be provided to countries recently coming on board to develop their targeting strategies in line with the above. Finally, ongoing support will also be provided as required over the course of the year to analyse emerging beneficiary data to ensure targeting is socially inclusive and that services available to youth meet their needs and match labour market requirements.

Appendix 1: Updated logical framework: Progress against objectives, outcomes and outputs

Results Hierarchy Means of verification	Objectively verifiable indicators* Assumptions	Progress Status	
Outreach	Estimated persons receiving services supported by the project (RIMS 2.3.1) (Target=11,275)		
Goal To create sustainable employment and income generating opportunities for youth in agriculture related activities	% of targeted young men and women (15-35) who have reported improvements in income following graduation from hubs against the baseline (Target = 30%) % of targeted young men and women (15-35) who have reported access to wage employment following graduation from hubs against the baseline target (Target = 70%)		☐ Project M&E records ☐ Mid-term review of Programme ☐ Impact assessments ☐ SMEs records and national/local labour s
Objective/Outcome 1. 11,275 self and wage employment opportunities for youth through functional networks of integrated agribusiness hubs	09 integrated agribusiness hubs successfully established and operational	09 established and operational	☐ Project M&E records ☐ Impact assessments ☐ SMEs records and national/local labour s ☐ MIS systems ☐ Outcome Surveys
	2,255 agri-enterprises established by mentored rural youth	56	
	9,020 of rural youth in wage employment	284	
Output 1.1 09 Integrated agribusiness hubs are upgraded, setup and operational	09 facilities/equipment upgraded for hubs operationalization	05 upgraded and 04 currently undergoing upgrades	☐ Project M&E records ☐ Progress reports ☐ Hub reports ☐ MIS systems ☐ MoUs signed
	At least 09 partner Financial Service Providers identified	09 identified and engaged	
	09 assessments in commodity value chains reports	05 VCA done and reports ready	
	09 labour market assessments reports	05 LMA done and reports ready	
Output 1.2. At least 09 Modular technical, vocational and business training are developed and conducted	09 enhanced competency based training modules approved and used by PHs in collaboration with the education and training system	05 CBT modules approved and been used by PHs	☐ Project M&E records ☐ Hub Reports ☐ Surveys with employe ☐ MIS systems ☐ Progress Reports Cur ☐ Programs developed
	09 training and recruitment plan for TVET trainers and specialists for select streams developed	None done so far	
	2,255 youth trained in income generating activities and business management** (RIMS 2.3.8)	544 trained	

Results Hierarchy verification Assumptions	Objectively verifiable indicators*	Progress status	Means of
	30-60% time in courses allocated to practical instructions	Done, all hub courses have been designed in that way	
Output 1.2.1 9,020 youth are trained in wage-employment and access job placement opportunities	09 skill development trainings based on labour market assessments	05 training done	☐ Project M&E records ☐ Hub Reports ☐ Surveys with employe ☐ MIS systems ☐ Progress Reports
	At least 09 consultative meetings between employers and PH	09 done	
	At least 20 MoUs signed with employers	38 done	
	9,020 of persons provided apprenticeships and internships by employers/agro enterprises	720 currently placed as interns	

Output 1.2.2 2,255 youth are trained in self-employment and establish enterprises	At least 500 to 1000 individual and/or joint business plans developed	70 business plans developed	☐ Project M&E records ☐ Hub Reports ☐ Reports from financial institutions ☐ Programme Surveys ☐ MIS systems
	At least 70% of trained youth access financial services (RIMS 2.3.4)		
	At least 50% of business linkages established between agribusinesses owned by trained young people		
	At least 70% of incubated youth have improved market access (RIMS 2.1.3)		
	At least 70% of agribusinesses providing services to the farming communities		
	25-50% of finance raised in support of business plans		
	At least 70% of young people accessing post-hub mentoring services		
Objective/Outcome 2. At least 5 Integrated agribusiness hubs models up taken and scaled by public and private actors through policy changes	At least 05 country-level policy engagement processes conducted leading to pro-youth employment policy adjustment (RIMS 3.3.5)	01 done	☐ Impact assessments ☐ Relevant National Policy ☐ Outcome Surveys
Output 2.1 At least 2 Evidence-based knowledge products developed	01 Knowledge Management and Communication strategy developed and functional		☐ Project M&E records ☐ MIS systems ☐ Knowledge products ☐ Progress Reports ☐ KM strategy paper
	At least 02 knowledge products generated	01 done	
	01 impact assessment plan developed		
Output 2.2. increased # of rural youth involved in Policy dialogue	At least 05 policy dialogue workshops conducted	02 done	
	02 Policy Guidance Notes/briefs developed		

Results Hierarchy verification Assumptions	Objectively verifiable indicators*	Progress status	Means of
Output 2.3. Knowledge is shared and exchanged	01 P2P platform is developed for rural youth		
	02 exchange visits for graduating youth conducted		
	6 channels for KM/COM product dissemination		
	50-70% of the 2,255 graduated youth participate in business fora		

Annex 3: Action Plan from MTR recommendations



Action Plan 4 ABH
MTR Feedback (002).x