

175th Session of the FAO Council

Item 7: Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative

At its 168th Session (CL 168/5), the Council requested FAO to provide regular updates on progress and results achieved in the implementation of the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative. As of the end of April 2024, there are 68 Governments that have signed on as members of the HIH Initiative, with an additional six countries engaged or using the innovative Hand-in-Hand tools and approaches such as the Geospatial Platform.

A key milestone was also reached in October 2023 with the holding of the second Global Hand-in-Hand Investment Forum where 31 countries and two Regional Initiatives (Sahel in Africa and Dry Corridor in Central America) presented their prioritised agrifood investment cases to a global audience at FAO headquarters. Details of each country investment case and the progress made are included in the update.

As follow-up to the HIH Investment Forum (HIH IF), several member countries have taken the initiative to organize nine national level Investment Fora as well as two sub-regional fora and one regional forum organized in Africa, during 2023.

The unique approach of the HIH also grew significantly with over 400 matchmaking meetings with investors arranged for member countries during the Investment Forum 2023. An updated online app is now operational which enables HIH members to connect with investors throughout the year.

The HIH is working in synergy with multiple other corporate initiatives such as the 1000 Digital Villages, One Country One Priority Product (OCOP), etc. Synergies are also being explored with the efforts around the preparation of Common Country Analysis (CCA) in support of selected countries.

Development of human capital is at the core of HIH support. The Geographic Information System (GIS) team provided specialised trainings to 1 064 people and 560 people were trained in advanced socio-economic analysis to date. Based on investors' feedback from the Investment Forum, HIH is also supporting three regional trainings on the FAO open-source EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT) for 32 member countries during 2024.

The development of the HIH dashboard has advanced in terms of data quality and automation as well as an interactive globe to facilitate users' access and monitoring. Updated HIH communications materials and products have also been developed and disseminated, and used extensively for FAO's briefings on the World Food Forum as well as in engagements with investors, stakeholders and the private sector.

The [HIH webpage](#) has seen a tripling of user access and the inclusion of investment cases as well as a news section and media reports on follow-up events such as national investment fora. HIH is currently developing communications materials around several HIH success stories in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in close collaboration with FAO Office of SIDS, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

The third edition of the Global HIH IF will be held from 15 to 17 October 2024 at FAO headquarters in Rome, with the active participation of 29 HIH member countries and five Regional Initiatives presenting their prioritised agrifood investment cases.

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