

## 176th Session of the Council

### Written Correspondence Procedure – inputs from Members - English version

#### Item 6 – Update on the Hand-in-Hand Initiative

Member Name	Comments
Australia (Wednesday, 20 November 2024 – 22.16)	<p>Australia appreciates this update on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative.</p> <p>We note the continued growth in the number of countries participating in the HIH initiative and the reported strong engagement in the recent global HIH Investment Forum. We recognise the potential of HIH in facilitating targeted investment in agrifood systems and driving market growth, complementing work by existing regional investment partners in the Pacific region. We support the continued emphasis on climate-smart investments.</p> <p>Recognising the particular challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in attracting quality investments towards agri-food value chains in support of agri-food system transformation, we note the recent efforts to identify and maximise potential partnerships and investment opportunities in the Southwest Pacific region. We draw attention to the recently released Pacific SIDS Investment Programme (CL176/Inf/8) and encourage FAO to ensure complementarity among its activities in the Pacific.</p> <p>We further note FAO RAP is considering developing a regional HIH Initiative possibly to be focused on rice or climate change. We request further details about this proposal, including its scope and focus (Asia and/or the Pacific region?), together with the linkages to the aforementioned Pacific SIDS Investment Programme. We strongly encourage the FAO RAP to identify existing programs, partners and linkages to ensure synergies are maximised and there is no duplication of efforts.</p> <p>Regarding the HIH dashboard, ‘designed to provide a visual representation of key initiative metrics and performance indicators’, we note that metrics presented relate to the number of countries participating, and numbers of people trained in GIS and SFA.</p> <p>However, it is not immediately apparent where the value of confirmed investments can be found. We understand from the paper that since the 2022 and 2023 Investment Forums, collectively over USD 3.8 billion has been committed or is under negotiation. The dashboard could be enhanced to show which countries or regions are successfully attracting investment and in what products to support important learnings for the HIH initiative.</p> <p>We consider that in addition to showing the potential of investments (as featured on the dashboard), reporting on how much investment has actually been forthcoming for each country (and, over time, the impacts of the investment towards achieving the SDGs) are key performance criteria for the HIH. We would welcome an updated version of the Dashboard to reflect these elements.</p>

<p>Sri Lanka (Thursday, 21 November 2024 – 13.23)</p>	<p>Sri Lanka extends its gratitude to FAO for the timely update on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative. We acknowledge the successful recent hosting of the HIH Investment Forum and appreciate the information shared on the achievements across various countries. We note the importance of ensuring that HIH activities and processes are well-integrated and aligned with development and planning efforts at the country and regional levels.</p> <p>Sri Lanka is in the process of developing typologies based on geospatial, biophysical and socio-economic data for advanced analytics and welcome the potential contribution to the development of typologies, investment plans and communication strategy.</p>
<p>European Union (Thursday, 21 November 2024 – 17.04)</p>	<p>I am honoured to write to you on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.</p> <p>We thank FAO for the preparation of the comprehensive update on the Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative to the Council, including the detailed breakdown by country and region.</p> <p>We note the Members’ interest in the HIH Initiative as indicated by the seventy-two participating countries and the five Regional Initiatives. To gain a better understanding of the interventions, we would welcome additional information on the partners involved in the mentioned countries. Specifically, it would be useful to have more information on the national and local authorities, donors, international financial institutions, private and civil society organization taking part in this initiative. Additionally, we would appreciate more details on the support that is available to HIH ‘approach countries’.</p> <p>In October 2024, the third HIH Investment Forum presented USD 15 billion in investment opportunities across 115 cases, with participation from 29 countries and five regional initiatives. We would welcome clarification on how this USD 15 billion is calculated and how its delivery will be monitored and evaluated.</p> <p>The update indicates that the HIH Initiative has facilitated USD 3.8 billion in agriculture and food systems investments since 2022. In this regard we would appreciate receiving details of the amounts, countries, and thematic areas where these opportunities have materialised.</p> <p>To ensure the HIH Initiative and the Investment Forum continue to serve the needs of Members, we encourage FAO to provide details on its monitoring and evaluation criteria for both and to regularly publish details of the participating countries, the partner organisations, and the investment totals.</p> <p>Lastly, we call on FAO to continue working, in the context of its strategic framework, on the shared goal of expanding our collective engagement with agriculture and food systems investment communities – development banks, foundations, impact funds, private sector, donors, and other development partners – to accelerate investment in sustainable agriculture and food systems transformation for the SDGs.</p>