

US\$2,139.4 MILLION  
INVESTED BY IFAD IN THE  
REGION'S ONGOING PORTFOLIO

# WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

US\$324.5 MILLION  
IN IFAD FINANCING  
APPROVED IN 2022

52 ONGOING PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS IN  
PARTNERSHIP WITH 23 COUNTRIES IN THE REGION  
AT THE END OF 2022

4 NEW PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS APPROVED  
IN 2022 IN CAMEROON, THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
OF THE CONGO, MALI AND MAURITANIA

## 24 COUNTRIES

Benin ■ 3  
Burkina Faso 4  
Cabo Verde ■ 1  
Cameroon 2  
Central African Republic 2  
Chad 2  
Congo 1  
Côte d'Ivoire ■ 2  
Democratic Republic of the  
Congo 2  
Equatorial Guinea  
Gabon 1  
Gambia (The) 1  
Ghana ■ 4  
Guinea 1  
Guinea-Bissau 2  
Liberia ■ 3  
Mali 3  
Mauritania ■ 2  
Niger ■ 4  
Nigeria 3  
Sao Tome and Principe 1  
Senegal 4  
Sierra Leone 2  
Togo 2

Numbers indicate ongoing  
projects and programmes  
■ Countries with ongoing  
ASAP grants



## HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT

# SIERRA LEONE

The second phase of the Rural Finance and Community Improvement Programme aims to strengthen and broaden small-scale farmers' access to rural finance. Through a network of 76 rural financial institutions, the programme is supporting farmers to expand their business activities.

Marie Thaimu Kamara started her rice production business with a loan from an IFAD-supported project: "I have employed my husband, sent my two daughters to university and my boy to secondary school."

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**OVER 200,000 RURAL HOUSEHOLDS CAN NOW ACCESS FINANCIAL SERVICES**

**HALF OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES' CLIENTS ARE WOMEN**

**FARMERS' AVERAGE INCOMES HAVE INCREASED BY MORE THAN ONE QUARTER**

In 2022, West and Central Africa experienced a rebound of economic activities that was well above expectations, following the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. And strong economic growth is predicted in 2023 in several countries of the region, including Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger and Senegal. However, in other countries growth is expected to be more subdued, and the social and economic hardships endured because of the pandemic have led to an increase in poverty overall. The war in Ukraine has accelerated increases in commodity prices in the region, which had already been an issue.

Addressing the complex drivers of fragility remains at the top of the policy agenda. Currently, 10 countries in the region are in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The expansion of areas with situations of fragility in the Sahel is undermining the better-than-expected economic growth achieved, and particularly threatens livelihoods in rural areas, where poverty rates are highest.

Public policies implemented to protect livelihoods and to cope with the adverse impacts of the multiple ongoing crises have resulted in growing levels of fiscal deficit and public debt. As of December 2022, three countries in West and Central Africa were in debt distress and 10 countries were at high risk of debt distress. The high level of indebtedness in several countries in the region is curtailing the ability to borrow to finance much-needed development interventions.

Through the 52 ongoing IFAD-supported projects reaching 13 million rural people, IFAD is providing country-specific and tailored interventions to improve the food security and resilience of vulnerable rural people. In line with IFAD12 commitments, there are increased investments in mainstreaming youth, gender, nutrition and climate change in IFAD-supported operations across the region. The mobilization of resources from climate finance institutions and other partners is enabling us to invest more to support rural people to cope with climate change. Moreover, IFAD is committed to enhancing its country-level policy engagement, through the establishment of the regional office in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and by increasing its country presence.

## **PARTNERING WITH OTHERS TO REACH MORE RURAL PEOPLE**

The Joint Programme for the Sahel in Response to the Challenges of COVID-19, Conflicts and Climate Change (SD3C) in the Sahel is strengthening cross-border trade and improving fishery productivity through climate-resilient practices and technologies. The programme is being implemented with our Rome-based partners FAO and WFP, and others, and is projected to benefit more than 100,000 rural households. Another programme enabling rural people to improve their incomes in the context of climate change is the Regional Programme for the Integration of Agricultural Market (PRIMA), which is being implemented in Benin and Togo. Both SD3C and PRIMA are region-wide initiatives that adopt innovative, market-based approaches to addressing challenges related to climate change.

## **FOCUSING ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS**

Nature-based approaches are crucial to IFAD's climate work across West and Central Africa. In Liberia, the Tree Crops Extension Project (TCEP) supports 10,000 cocoa farmers through the provision of productivity-enhancing farm inputs, including improved cocoa seedlings. One of TCEP's main activities consists of establishing the national cocoa seed garden on 30 hectares of land, with the goal of reducing reliance on imports of planting materials from neighbouring countries. The project has resulted in the planting of 12,287 budded cocoa stumps and the establishment of a 40,000-rootstock nursery. This will significantly reduce dependence on seed imports.



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**“Prior to the interventions of TCEP, we used to dry our cocoa on the ground where we had challenges in controlling the intrusion of domestic animals and foreign particles, including sand and stone particles. We are grateful to the project and IFAD for improving our cocoa production and processing methods.” Emerson Dahn, beneficiary of the Tree Crops Extension Project**

**“ProSCAWA has brought hope to the people of Kotorkor. There will be food on our tables and money in our pockets.” Kotorkor community chief in Ghana, participant in the ProSCAWA project**

### **TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES BY EMPOWERING WOMEN**

It is important that approaches to empower women and transform gender relations are embedded in approaches to empower rural communities. This is an increasing focus of IFAD’s activities throughout West and Central Africa. In Ghana, the Gender Action Learning System of the Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Programme piloted training on gender equality, social norms and community development standards for over 800 households. The pilot has resulted in significant behaviour changes, including increased participation of women in decision-making at the household and community levels. As a consequence, men have reported being more involved in household chores such as fetching water and looking after children, resulting in greater household cooperation and harmony, including in the distribution of farm work.

Sustainable, climate-resilient approaches to small-scale fisheries have been an important strategy for improving household nutrition and coping with climate change across the region. In Ghana and Nigeria, the Promoting Sustainable Cage Aquaculture in West Africa (ProSCAWA) project has advanced cage aquaculture – a way of raising fish inside mesh enclosures – which is more accessible to poor farmers with little land and has the advantage of being less carbon-intensive than other methods. The project has created jobs for young people – in the fisheries but also along the value chain in processing activities – and improved the availability of nutrition-rich fish in local markets.