



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Hand-in-Hand
Initiative

Democratic Republic of the Congo



HAND-IN-HAND INITIATIVE | 2026 INVESTMENT FORUM

FAO'S HAND-IN-HAND INITIATIVE

The investment opportunities presented in this document derive from government-led investment plans developed under FAO's Hand-in-Hand (HIH) Initiative. The Initiative supports countries in identifying high-impact agrifood system investments through a combination of data-driven territorial analysis, value chain assessments, and close collaboration with national counterparts. Using the Hand-in-Hand Geospatial Platform, the Initiative integrates geospatial, biophysical, and socio-economic data to identify priority "green zones" where agricultural potential and poverty incidence overlap, creating strong opportunities for transformative investment. Based on these analyses, national governments lead the development of investment plans that identify priority value chains, key bottlenecks, and potential investments required to accelerate agrifood system transformation. These investment opportunities aim to raise incomes, improve nutrition, and empower poor and vulnerable populations, while strengthening resilience to climate change and supporting the sustainable management of natural resources. The Initiative focuses on territories where targeted investments can generate the greatest impact in reducing poverty and hunger, contributing to progress towards Sustainable Development Goals SDG1 (No Poverty), SDG2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities), while balancing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS

The opportunities presented in this document are derived from government investment plans and reflect national development priorities identified through the Hand-in-Hand Initiative. FAO provides analytical and technical support in the identification and assessment of these opportunities and facilitates engagement with potential partners. The concepts presented are indicative and require further structuring and discussion with the relevant governments and potential investors. This document therefore presents a pipeline of government-prioritized agrifood investment opportunities that have been pre-screened using FAO's Hand-in-Hand analytical tools. FAO can support interested partners by facilitating technical exchanges and follow-up discussions with relevant government counterparts.

IMPACT TAGS

Investment cases are classified across four impact areas to highlight their primary development contributions and ensure comparability across countries and value chains.



Livelihoods

Income, productivity, jobs, and market access



Gender & Youth

Inclusion and opportunities for women and young people



Planet & Environment

Climate resilience and sustainable resource management



Digital

Use of technology to improve efficiency and access

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



A vast, underexploited agricultural frontier at the heart of Africa's largest regional markets

KEY INVESTMENT SIGNALS

POPULATION

116.5M

(MILLION)

GDP GROWTH

6.2% (2024)

(%)

ARABLE LAND

80M ha

(MILLION HECTARES)

INVESTMENT CASE



STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

- Africa's second-largest country, bordering nine countries
- Member of four regional blocs: CEEAC, EAC, SADC, COMESA
- Preferential access to a market of over 400 million consumers
- Strategic corridors (Lobito, Green Corridor) link production to ports



UNTAPPED AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL

- Only 10% of arable land currently under cultivation
- Stable climate with strong year-round rainfall
- Large underused fisheries, aquaculture and pastureland reserves
- 67% forest cover with over 700 exploitable tree species



ENABLING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

- Multi-year tax holidays for agricultural companies
- Duty-free import of agricultural equipment and inputs
- Tax-exempt agricultural exports
- Dedicated agencies supporting investors and exporters

DRC: INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO



Turning food-import dependence into a regional agro-industrial opportunity across five priority value chains

INVESTMENT PLAN DRC	INVESTMENT CASE 1. MAIZE	INVESTMENT CASE 2. POULTRY	INVESTMENT CASE 3. AQUACULTURE	INVESTMENT CASE 4. COCOA	INVESTMENT CASE 5. COFFEE
IMPACT TAGS  	IMPACT TAGS  	IMPACT TAGS  	IMPACT TAGS  	IMPACT TAGS  	IMPACT TAGS  
INVESTMENT USD 1.2 billion	INVESTMENT USD 185.5 million	INVESTMENT USD 329.0 million	INVESTMENT USD 152.9 million	INVESTMENT USD 293.1 million	INVESTMENT USD 273.3 million
NPV USD 3.4 billion	NPV USD 90.5 million	NPV USD 573.1 million	NPV USD 207.1 million	NPV USD 1.5 billion	NPV USD 997.2 million
AVG IRR 20.9%	IRR 13.3%	IRR 21.4%	IRR 19.7%	IRR 18.3%	IRR 22.1%
DIRECT BENEFICIARIES 56.3 thousand	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES 10.5 thousand	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES 24.0 thousand	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES 2.0 thousand	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES 8.3 thousand	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES 11.5 thousand
INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES 281.3 thousand	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES 52.5 thousand	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES 120.0 thousand	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES 10.0 thousand	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES 41.4 thousand	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES 57.5 thousand
AVG PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE --	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE +USD 696 / 24,000	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE +USD 3,100 / 30,000	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE +USD 6,900 / 12,200	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE +USD 7,500 / 147,000	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE +USD 8,500 / 171,300
GHG IMPACT -2.9 million tCO2-e	GHG IMPACT -49.8 thousand tCO2-e	GHG IMPACT -32 tCO2-e	GHG IMPACT +12.5 thousand tCO2-e	GHG IMPACT -1.4 million tCO2-e	GHG IMPACT -1.4 million tCO2-e

1. MAIZE



Closing the country's largest food gap by rebuilding the maize value chain from seed to market

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT

USD 185.5M
(MILLION)

NPV

USD 90.5M
(MILLION)

IRR

13.3%
(%)

RATIONALE

- Deep, structural national deficit that imports currently fill
- Strong upside from very low current yields per hectare
- Anchors the Lobito Corridor's food security priorities
- Direct link to reducing poultry sector feed costs

KEY BOTTLENECKS

1. Limited access to certified seeds, quality fertilizer and technical extension services
2. Insufficient developed perimeters and mechanization services
3. Low storage and processing capacity, weak market access

PROPOSED INVESTMENTS(*)

Public

PPP

26 seed adaptation/production centers (CAPSAs); 26 fertilizer production units; starter seed kits for smallholders; seed for large producers; technical extension services (USD 48.5 million)

Private

PPP

Development of 50,000 ha for large producers; support for 50,000 ha for medium/family producers; 26 mechanized service centers (USD 101.5 million)

Private

Public

PPP

9 maize processing units; 10 modern storage facilities; value chain organization and structuring (USD 35.5 million)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS



DIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
10.5K
(THOUSAND)



INDIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
52.5K
(THOUSAND)



PER CAPITA INCOME
INCREASE
+696 / 24,000
(USD/SMALL-SCALE FARMER) /
(USD/LARGE-SCALE FARMER)



GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
-49.8K
(THOUSAND tCO2-e)

Note: (*) Opportunities reflect government priorities identified through the FAO Hand-in-Hand Initiative and require further structuring with relevant public and private stakeholders.

2. POULTRY



Substituting imported poultry with a competitive, disease-resilient domestic industry

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT

USD 329.0M
(MILLION)

NPV

USD 573.1M
(MILLION)

IRR

21.4%
(%)

RATIONALE

- Fast-growing urban demand with high import substitution potential
- Strong integration opportunity with local maize production
- Large network of family and commercial farms ready to scale
- High job creation potential across the value chain

KEY BOTTLENECKS

1. Difficult access to day-old chicks and low flock productivity

Private

PPP

25 pivot hatcheries; 4,000 large-scale poultry farms; 20,000 medium/family farms (USD 322.5 million)

2. Limited extension services and high disease prevalence

Public

Research support, vaccination programs and extension services (USD 2.5 million)

3. Insufficient access to competitive feed; strong import competition

Public

PPP

Feed mills and pilot infrastructure (provenderies and abattoirs); governance and regulatory support; value chain coordination (USD 4.0 million)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS



DIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
24.0K
(THOUSAND)



INDIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
120.0K
(THOUSAND)



PER CAPITA INCOME
INCREASE
+3,100 / 30,000
(USD/SMALL-SCALE FARMER) /
(USD/LARGE-SCALE FARMER)



GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
-32
(tCO2-e)

Note: (*) Opportunities reflect government priorities identified through the FAO Hand-in-Hand Initiative and require further structuring with relevant public and private stakeholders.

3. AQUACULTURE



Unlocking a domestic fish supply to reduce reliance on imports

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT

USD 152.9M
(MILLION)

NPV

USD 207.1M
(MILLION)

IRR

19.7%
(%)

RATIONALE

- Wide gap between fish demand and domestic production
- Strong potential in freshwater resource-rich zones
- Opportunity for integrated feed and cold chain development
- Scalable model spanning smallholder and commercial farms

KEY BOTTLENECKS

1. Lack of quality fingerlings and limited extension services

Private

Public

PPP

500 large-scale fish farms; support for smallholder farm development; research and extension services; 20 fish hatcheries (USD 78.0 million)

2. Insufficient access to quality feed

Private

Public

PPP

Support for 1,500 medium/family farms; rehabilitation of 8 fingerling centers; 10 feed production units (USD 41.0 million)

3. Poor infrastructure and limited market access

Public

10 modern cold storage facilities; value chain structuring and organization (USD 33.9 million)

PROPOSED INVESTMENTS(*)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS



DIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
2.0K
(THOUSAND)



INDIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
10.0K
(THOUSAND)



PER CAPITA INCOME
INCREASE
+6,900 / 12,200
(USD/SMALL-SCALE FARMER) /
(USD/LARGE-SCALE FARMER)



GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
+12.5K
(THOUSAND tCO2-e)

Note: (*) Opportunities reflect government priorities identified through the FAO Hand-in-Hand Initiative and require further structuring with relevant public and private stakeholders.

4. COCOA



Reviving aging plantations to capture premium export markets

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT

USD 293.1M
(MILLION)

NPV

USD 1.5B
(BILLION)

IRR

18.3%
(%)

RATIONALE

- Established export markets already in place across several countries
- Significant rehabilitation upside on abandoned productive land
- Strong smallholder and large-producer participation potential
- Access to premium, currency-earning export segments

KEY BOTTLENECKS

1. Lack of quality planting material

Public

Seed production support in 2 CAPSAs for cocoa; research centers on perennial crops (USD 4.0 million)

2. Disease burden, aging and abandoned plantations

PPP

Rehabilitation of 150,000 ha for 1,500 large producers; support to family production on 33,870 ha for 6,774 smallholders (USD 171.1 million)

3. Limited access to production zones and low processing capacity

Public

PPP

4 cocoa transformation units; rehabilitation of 2,000 km of access roads; value chain organization (USD 118.0 million)

PROPOSED INVESTMENTS(*)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS



DIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
8.3K
(THOUSAND)



INDIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
41.4K
(THOUSAND)



PER CAPITA INCOME
INCREASE
+7,500 / 147,000
(USD/SMALL-SCALE FARMER) /
(USD/LARGE-SCALE FARMER)



GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
-1.4M
(MILLION tCO₂-e)

Note: (*) Opportunities reflect government priorities identified through the FAO Hand-in-Hand Initiative and require further structuring with relevant public and private stakeholders.

5. COFFEE



Restoring one of the country's historic export engines through renewed plantations and processing

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT

USD 273.3M
(MILLION)

NPV

USD 997.2M
(MILLION)

IRR

22.1%
(%)

RATIONALE

- Long-standing export tradition with existing processing assets
- Strong potential from rehabilitating both large and family farms
- Meaningful upside from local roasting and value addition
- Direct link to established export support institutions

KEY BOTTLENECKS

1. Lack of quality planting material

Public

Seed production support in 4 CAPSAs for coffee; research centers on perennial crops (USD 4.1 million)

2. Disease burden, aging and abandoned plantations

PPP

Rehabilitation of 150,000 ha for 1,500 large producers; support to family production for 9,990 smallholders (USD 187.3 million)

3. Limited access to production zones and low processing capacity

Public

PPP

Rehabilitation of 2 ONAPAC processing plants; 8 coffee processing units with roasters; rehabilitation of 1,400 km of access roads; value chain organization (USD 81.9 million)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS



DIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
11.5K
(THOUSAND)



INDIRECT
BENEFICIARIES
57.5K
(THOUSAND)



PER CAPITA INCOME
INCREASE
+8,500 / 171,300
(USD/SMALL-SCALE FARMER) /
(USD/LARGE-SCALE FARMER)



GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
-1.4M
(MILLION tCO2-e)

Note: (*) Opportunities reflect government priorities identified through the FAO Hand-in-Hand Initiative and require further structuring with relevant public and private stakeholders.



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*Click here to see full
Investment Note:*



*Click here to request a
bilateral meeting:*

