Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Hand-in-Hand Initiative

Sierra Leone

HAND-IN-HAND INITIATIVE | 2026 INVESTMENT FORUM

IMPORTANT NOTES

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

SIERRA LEONE

A high-rainfall, land-abundant agrifood system stabilizing macro conditions and mobilizing strong investor interest

KEY INVESTMENT SIGNALS

POPULATION

8.4M

(MILLION)

GDP PER CAPITA

USD 800

AGRICULTURAL LAND

5.4M ha

(MILLION HECTARES)

INVESTMENT CASE

STABILIZING FOOD ECONOMY

- GDP growth ~4.3% (2024)
- Headline inflation: 4.35% (Dec 2025), −9.4pp YoY
- Food inflation: 0.44% (Dec 2025), −13.5pp YoY
- Rice prices down 28% YoY

NATIONAL POLICY COMMITMENT

- Presidential Council for Feed Salone
- Co-chair, Alliance of Champions for Food System Transformation
- Feed Salone (2023–28): import substitution & agribusiness focus
- Priority sectors: rice, crop diversification, value addition

INVESTOR CONFIDENCE GROWING

- USD 800M+ in investment pledges mobilized
- ~40% already active investments
- Key deals: cassava (IsDB $37M), SAPZ (AfDB $25M + OPEC $50M), livestock ($105M), irrigation (5,000 ha), roads (420km)

SIERRA LEONE: INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Unlocking productivity and import-substitution opportunities across high-demand domestic and export-oriented agrifood markets

INVESTMENT PLAN **SIERRA LEONE**	INVESTMENT CASE **1. RICE**	INVESTMENT CASE **2. POULTRY & FEED**	INVESTMENT CASE **3. CASSAVA**	INVESTMENT CASE **4. PALM OIL**
IMPACT TAGS	IMPACT TAGS	IMPACT TAGS	IMPACT TAGS	IMPACT TAGS
INVESTMENT **USD 759.7 million**	INVESTMENT **USD 191.0 million**	INVESTMENT **USD 241.5 million**	INVESTMENT **USD 41.5 million**	INVESTMENT **USD 285.7 million**
NPV **USD 122.2 million**	NPV **USD 20.6 million**	NPV **USD 35.7 million**	NPV **USD 22.1 million**	NPV **USD 43.8 million**
AVG IRR **26.7%**	IRR **32.1%**	IRR **22.9%**	IRR **23.1%**	IRR **28.6%**
DIRECT BENEFICIARIES **138.0 thousand**	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES **38.2 thousand**	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES **60.6 thousand**	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES **9.7 thousand**	DIRECT BENEFICIARIES **29.4 thousand**
INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES **827.5 thousand**	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES **229.0 thousand**	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES **363.6 thousand**	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES **58.4 thousand**	INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES **176.5 thousand**
AVG PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE **+USD 221**	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE **+USD 215**	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE **+USD 197**	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE **+USD 200**	PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE **+USD 270**
GHG IMPACT **+877.1 thousand tCO2-e**	GHG IMPACT **+473.3 thousand tCO2-e**	GHG IMPACT **+4.1 million tCO2-e**	GHG IMPACT **-111.8 thousand tCO2-e**	GHG IMPACT **-3.6 million tCO2-e**

1. RICE

Scaling mechanization, milling, and market linkages to cut rice import dependence

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT
USD 191.0M
(MILLION)

NPV
USD 20.6M
(MILLION)

IRR
32.1%
(%)

RATIONALE

- Imports meet one third of demand: 350–450 MT/year (USD 150–200M)
- Low yields: 2.0–2.4 MT/ha vs. 8 MT/ha potential; milling only ~40% utilized
- Goal by 2028: halve rice imports, double yields to 4 MT/ha, 80% milling utilization, post-harvest losses under 10%

KEY BOTTLENECKS	PROPOSED INVESTMENTS(*)
1. Limited affordability, seasonal equipment use, maintenance constraints	Private Mechanization Service Centers: 250 mechanization packages + 250 workshops/service sheds; rental/shared-service model (USD 100.0 million)
2. Rural infrastructure constraints, competition from imports, post-harvest losses	Private, PPP Post-Harvest & Processing: rehabilitate 204 mills, construct 160 new mills, equip 364 mills, 72,000 m² storage (USD 49.2 million)
3. Weak coordination, limited finance access, weak aggregation	PPP Aggregation, Storage & Financing: 66 cluster-level aggregation hubs + 5 financing facilities (USD 41.8 million)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES
38.2K
(THOUSAND)

INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES
229.0K
(THOUSAND)

PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE
+215
(USD/PERSON)

GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
+473.3K
(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.

Hand-in-Hand Initiative

2. POULTRY & FEED

Building domestic feed and poultry capacity to close the import gap

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT
USD 241.5M
(MILLION)

NPV
USD 35.7M
(MILLION)

IRR
22.9%
(%)

RATIONALE

- ~USD 40M/year spent on chicken & egg imports; 60% of chicken meat, 40% of eggs imported
- Poultry consumption up 47% (2018–2022)
- Feed equals 60–75% of production cost; local milling capacity limited
- Goal by 2028: halve poultry production costs via local feed, cut frozen imports by half

KEY BOTTLENECKS / PROPOSED INVESTMENTS(*)

KEY BOTTLENECKS	PROPOSED INVESTMENTS(*)
1. Volatile maize/soy prices, competition with imported feed, climate variability	PPP Feed Crop Production: 110,000 ha commercial maize/soy, 27 market-linkage hubs, 550 Farmer Field Schools (USD 173.2 million)
2. Inconsistent feedstock supply, low mill utilization, feed quality risks	PPP Feed Mills: 3 regional feed mills (7t/hour) + 55 small feed mills (1t/day) (USD 22.9 million)
3. Disease outbreaks, competition from frozen imports, high input costs	Private Broiler & Hatchery Expansion: 110 commercial broiler/layer farms, 5 hatchery investments, cold-chain systems (USD 35.4 million)
4. Weak market linkages, limited access to affordable finance	PPP Market Linkages & Financing: contract farming/B2B development + access-to-finance facilities (USD 10.0 million)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES
60.6K
(THOUSAND)

INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES
363.6K
(THOUSAND)

PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE
+197
(USD/PERSON)

GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
+4.1M
(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.

Hand-in-Hand Initiative

3. CASSAVA

Formalizing regional export channels for garri, HQCF, and starch

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT

USD 41.5M
(MILLION)

NPV

USD 22.1M
(MILLION)

IRR

23.1%
(%)

RATIONALE

- 2nd staple after rice, 57.4% of agricultural GDP; 2.6M MT on 155,706 ha, smallholder-based
- Low yields: ~15 t/ha vs. 60 t/ha potential
- Garri exports up 1.6→42 MT formally (2021–2025); ~600 MT/week informal trade to Guinea & Liberia
- Goal: formalize exports, launch HQCF/starch trade

KEY BOTTLENECKS	PROPOSED INVESTMENTS(*)
1. Yield gains below expectations, cassava mosaic disease, climate variability	**Private** Cassava Production Clusters: 15 production clusters across 25,000 ha, 250 Farmer Field Schools (USD 24.0 million)
2. Unreliable fresh cassava supply, low ramp-up throughput, thin margins	**Private** HQCF/Starch Processing: 3 processing units + 3 small-capacity units (USD 6.2 million)
3. Road disruption in rainy season, coordination challenges	**PPP** Collection & Logistics Network: 15 collection/aggregation networks + 55 transport-support packages (USD 5.7 million)
4. Limited finance access, weak managerial capacity	**PPP** Financing & Capacity Building: 5 financing cycles/windows (USD 5.6 million)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES
9.7K
(THOUSAND)

INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES
58.4K
(THOUSAND)

PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE
+200
(USD/PERSON)

GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
-111.8K
(THOUSAND tCO_2-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. PALM OIL

Scaling export-oriented palm oil production on an established domestic base

INVESTMENT PROFILE (INDICATIVE)

INVESTMENT
USD 285.7M
(MILLION)

NPV
USD 43.8M
(MILLION)

IRR
28.6%
(%)

RATIONALE

- 2nd-largest agri export; ~50,000 MT crude palm oil/year (~USD 50M)
- Palm oil equals 35% of global vegetable oil demand; West Africa gaining share
- ~70% of smallholder output exported informally to Guinea; 2022 Land Law easing access
- Goal by 2032: scale production for domestic processing & export, eliminate imports

KEY BOTTLENECKS	PROPOSED INVESTMENTS(*)
1. Slow yield recovery, climate variability, disease pressure	Private Palm Production Rehabilitation & Expansion: rehabilitate/expand 40,000 ha, 400 Farmer Field Schools, 800km feeder roads (USD 123.2 million)
2. Low mill utilization, feedstock shortages	PPP Community & Cluster Palm Oil Mills: 40 community/cluster mills (USD 80.0 million)
3. High operating costs, technical constraints	Private, PPP Integrated Processing & Refining: 8 medium integrated mills + 4 refinery/downstream facilities (USD 80.0 million)
4. Limited finance uptake	PPP Access to Finance & Value Chain Support: 5 financing windows/facilities (USD 2.5 million)

SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES
29.4K
(THOUSAND)

INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES
176.5K
(THOUSAND)

PER CAPITA INCOME INCREASE
+270
(USD/PERSON)

GHG IMPACT
FAO EXACT CARBON TOOL
-3.6M
(MILLION tCO_2-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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