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## Rural Poor Stimulus Initiative: Enhancing Capacity for Results-Based Management During the Covid-19 Crisis in Africa

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to seriously disrupt market arrangements and the livelihoods of rural producers, especially those of poor rural farmers in Eastern and Southern African countries, where agricultural technical assistance services are less structured, and governments face stronger fiscal challenges. The ultimate intended impact of the RPSI is to improve the food security and resilience of poor rural people affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, the Initiative aims to address the short-term disruptions in the food system that are expected to limit the ability of markets to function, disrupt production and processing.

The main efforts of this initiative are encompassed in the idea of building strong and reliable digital platforms that could be used by rural families to access markets and technical assistance remotely. The initiative will benefit farmers from Angola, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Lesotho, Uganda and Tanzania, and will be implemented by Programa Semear Internacional, complementing an already existing IFAD Grant in Brazil, having as executing agency IICA (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture).

The main objective is to create a “Technical Assistance” module, where farmers and technicians interact in real-time, offering solutions to respond to COVID-19 related storage, processing or market regulations/restrictions; connect buyers and sellers of family farming products by production chains; assess the main needs of producers so that it is possible to secure quick reactions; provide farmers and their organisations the possibility of the online development of business plans from a pre-established methodology; and, finally, empower producers so that they can use the tool appropriately and benefit from the trainings provided by it.

The activities target two specific groups: the first group comprises family farmers in African countries, indigenous populations, traditional communities, associations and social organisations, leaders of farmer associations, municipal administrators, and other actors in territorial collegiate. A great priority is given to rural youth, women and indigenous populations – they are the most vulnerable to climate- and disease-related risk, endure extreme conditions of poverty, lack access to the labour market, and, quite frequently, have no permanent income sources. The second group consists of public administrators, technicians, and local public policymakers.

**Keywords:** Africa, COVID, IFAD, UN

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