



IFAD–JAPAN
partnership on
public-private
collaboration

Enhanced Linkages between the Private Sector and Small-scale Producers

Strategic context

Japan's development cooperation strategy: Japan's renewed Official Development Assistance Charter (2023) promotes a more strategic and mutually beneficial approach to development cooperation. It prioritizes private sector engagement in sustainable business opportunities and focuses on areas such as food and energy security, digital transformation, health and nutrition, and disaster risk reduction. The principle of **human security** – ensuring that all people can live with dignity and freedom from want and fear – remains central to Japan's cooperation policy. In this context, Japan promotes innovative mechanisms such as the ELPS initiative, which mobilizes private investment and technology through structured partnerships between agribusinesses, small-scale producers and IFAD.

IFAD–Japan partnership: Japan has been a founding member and long-standing partner of IFAD since 1977, contributing over **US\$662 million** to IFAD's replenishments, which positions it among IFAD's top 10 donors. For IFAD13, Japan pledged **US\$42.7 million** and continues to provide additional targeted support for thematic initiatives such as the ELPS.

Shared priorities and collaboration framework: Japan's leadership on food and nutrition security – highlighted during its G7 Presidency in 2023 – aligns closely with IFAD's mandate to foster inclusive, sustainable and climate-resilient food systems. The collaboration under ELPS builds on this shared vision by linking Japanese expertise and investment with IFAD's field presence to achieve tangible results across multiple countries.

Japan is one of IFAD's founding members and a long-standing partner. Building on nearly five decades of collaboration, the partnership has evolved to include innovative public-private-producer initiatives, such as the **Enhanced Linkages between the Private Sector and Small-Scale Producers (ELPS)**, which leverage Japanese expertise and investment to support small-scale farmers in Africa and Asia.

The ELPS Initiative: A model for public-private-producer partnerships (4Ps)

Overview and objectives of the ELPS initiative: Launched by Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in April 2023 during its G7 Presidency and implemented by IFAD, ELPS strengthens partnerships between agribusinesses and small-scale producers in Africa and Asia. It promotes sustainable, market-oriented farming through win-win co-investment models that:

- Develop sustainable agricultural supply chains;
- Improve smallholders' productivity, quality, and market access; and
- Ensure environmental and social sustainability.

Food and agriculture companies gain **reliable, traceable sourcing channels**, while smallholders benefit from **technology transfer, training and access to higher-value markets**. Each partnership is structured as a joint project, with IFAD supporting producers to meet commercial standards and companies investing in supply-chain expansion, such as logistics or certification. All collaborations **follow IFAD's procurement rules** and undergo **due diligence** and joint design missions before implementation.

Financing and partnerships model: The Ministry has made available US\$3.6 million for implementation, as of January 2026. With the US\$1.3 million committed for implementation so far, the initiative has mobilized **US\$360,000 in private-sector co-investment** from four Japanese firms. They also contribute technical expertise – from agronomic training to certification support – strengthening **long-term sourcing and sustainability commitments**.

Examples of ELPS interventions: ELPS partners include food, agribusiness, and trading companies engaged in global supply chains – particularly consumer-facing firms in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Concrete interventions already under implementation include:

Bangladesh – sesame. In partnership with Euglena Group to enhance post-harvest handling and storage infrastructure, diversifying Japan's sesame import base while improving smallholder incomes by 10–20 per cent.

Rwanda – macadamia nuts. In collaboration with OSTI Group to support 500 farmers promoting organic practices and improved farming management, enabling progress toward organic Japanese Agricultural Standard (JAS) certification and contributing to Japan's sustainable sourcing objectives and premium export market access.

Tanzania – coffee. In partnership with UCC and Marubeni to strengthen producer organizations and introduce sustainable coffee practices, improving productivity and supply consistency.

Joint advocacy and visibility: ELPS has been showcased at major international events, including Expo, TICAD9, the UNGA high-level roundtables, and CFS53, underscoring Japan's leadership in public-private collaboration for food security.

Conclusion and possible scaling up and replicability

A model for scaling up public-private

cooperation: The partnership between IFAD and the Government of Japan demonstrates how coherent policies and shared priorities can translate into effective collaboration. Through the ELPS initiative, targeted public funding has successfully leveraged private investment and business expertise to strengthen smallholder agriculture. The model offers a **practical example** of public-private-producer partnerships (4Ps) that can be **adapted and replicated** across IFAD's portfolio to mobilize additional private capital for sustainable food systems.

Sustaining collaboration: All ELPS partnerships are designed as shorter-term engagements (one to two years), with progress and results jointly reported by IFAD and the Government of Japan to ensure transparency, accountability, and continuous learning. The leading role of the private sector partners in the project ensures that the results and linkages created are sustainable after project-end. This structured approach reinforces mutual trust among partners and provides a solid foundation for **scaling up future public-private initiatives** in support of resilient and inclusive rural economies.



Investing in rural people

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