

WFP Taps Into the India, Brazil, South Africa Fund in the Republic of Congo



Photo: WFP/Katherine Gaylord

WHAT IS THE IBSA FUND?

IBSA is a unique forum which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges.

The IBSA facility for poverty and hunger alleviation (IBSA Fund) was established jointly by India, Brazil and South Africa in 2004 and became operational in 2006 to identify replicable and scalable projects that can be disseminated to developing countries on a demand driven basis as examples of best practices in combating poverty and hunger.

IBSA Fund-supported projects help partner countries in the Global South to achieve their national priorities, as well as all other internationally agreed development goals.

UNOSSC financially manages and supports implementation of trust funds that support collaboration and piloting of South-South initiatives across the globe.

Thus far, 42 projects have been supported with 46.7 million USD allocated across 35 countries.

REPUBLIC OF CONGO (ROC) BACKGROUND

In RoC, food insecurity affects 33,3% of households, with high prevalence in rural areas, while 38% of the population is undernourished, and 19,6% of children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition.

The School Feeding Programme in RoC currently targets 388 schools supported with McGovern-Dole funds and 144 schools assisted in cash-based transfer modalities (Cantines Ya Buala and Mbala Pinda), providing nutritious meals to an estimated 173,000 students in 10 out of the country's 12 departments.

The main gaps in institutional capacity, at policy and technical levels include:

- support smallholder farmers (e.g., accessing credit and natural resources),
- insufficient technical assistance services,
- poor rural infrastructure,
- weak agricultural modernisation,
- inadequate food storage/processing practices/equipment, and
- limited capacity of farmer associations/cooperatives.

LEVERAGING THE IBSA FUND IN ROC

The UN World Food Programme's (WFP) Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil (Brazil CoE), the Government of RoC and the Government of Brazil have launched a new South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) project. The aim is to contribute to the food security and nutritional status of smallholder farmers, particularly women, and school children in RoC.

The project, called "Enhancing Family Farmers' Access to Local Markets in the Republic of Congo through South-South Cooperation" funded with 1 million USD by the IBSA Fund over two years, will enable RoC's Ministries to tap into the wealth of expertise and innovations available in Brazil, with a focus on pro-family farming and school feeding programmes.

The project will focus its actions on institutional capacity strengthening for policy makers at central and local levels, through a "training of trainers" approach and on-the-job coaching, with the participation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP) and of the Ministry of Pre-school, Primary, Secondary Education and Literacy (MEPSA) in RoC.

The project will also focus on capacity strengthening at the grassroots level for family farmer associations/cooperatives in targeted districts in the Bouenza, Plateaux and Pool departments. This will be done through delivery of equipment, tailored training, and in-field demonstrations by MAEP staff trained by their peers from IBSA country (Brazil).

In addition, the project will aim to enhance the institutional capacity of MEPSA at central and local levels to implement its National School Feeding Policy. Eventually, the aim is to transition from a WFP-led to a fully Government-led national programme with a strong component of locally purchased food.

The beneficiaries will include 65 policymakers and technical staff, 100 smallholder farmers and their households who make up 10 farmers' groups, 3000 school children and rural communities, 10 selected schools of the pilot Home-Grown School Feeding Programme.



Photo: WFP/Katherine Gaylord

SHARING THE BRAZILIAN EXPERIENCE THROUGH SSTC

Brazil was chosen as the right partner for RoC for this project as the Brazilian National School Feeding Programme (PNAE) is among the largest school feeding programmes in the world due to its geographic coverage and number of beneficiaries and is regarded as a role model for including family farming products on school menus.

Institutional purchase from family farmers is a key strategy for Brazil's Government to strengthen family farming.

Programmes such as the Food Procurement Programme (PAA), the National Programme for Strengthening Smallholder Agriculture (PRONAF), and institutions such as the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) and the state technical assistance and rural extension companies (EMATER) allowed farmers to get greater access to research and technology to increase production, generating greater income and better conditions for the sector.

This was made possible through the establishment of institutional procurement mechanisms, facilitating access to credit and creating new possibilities for insurance to guarantee the harvest of small properties, as well as by reinforcing technical assistance provided directly to farmers.

Brazil's comprehensive set of programmes to support smallholder farmers, including through public purchase for the School Feeding Programme, provides several policy innovations as well as technical solutions that will be shared with RoC and tailored to the local context to promote food security and improved nutrition in the country.

This project will be an opportunity for the Brazilian Government to share one of its good practices for the National School Feeding Programme, including its link with smallholder farming and multisectoral approach. This SSTC project aims to support RoC to improve its programmes in a similar manner.

The project, which will run for two years, includes market assessments, workshops, field visits, production of documents and manuals, distribution of farming equipment, and more.

A pilot approach will be followed to carry out capacity strengthening activities at local level for the participant ministries' staff and farmer associations/cooperatives.

Findings from the pilot evaluation will inform the adoption and scaling up of results across the country.



Photo: WFP/DIGITS