# IKEA Foundation Final Evaluation 2025 Management Response

| Evaluand identification data (subject of the evaluation) | | |
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| **Evaluand title:** | Accelerating the Global Transition to Sustainable Agriculture" Project, P03770 | |
| **Date started:**<br>**Date closed:** | October 2021-March 2026 (4.5 years) | |
| **Evaluand manager:** | **Programme/office:** | |
| Silvia Cardellino | Food and Agricultural Systems Team (FAST) | |

| Management Response Summary Data | |
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| **Evaluation or review title as it appears on final report:** Final Evaluation of the "Accelerating the Global Transition to Sustainable Agriculture" Project, referred to as AGSTA in the below<br>**Date received:** December 2025 | **Unit/person responsible for managing/tracking follow-up:**<br>IUCN Food and Agricultural Systems Team (FAST) / Pascale Bonzom |
| **Date Management Response approved**: 28 May 2026<br>**Last progress update**: *[date, for internal progress updates only]* | **All units/positions requested to take action**:<br>• FAST<br>• MEL Team |
| **Expected duration required to fully implement the MR:** linked to the design and inception of the potential next phase of the AGSTA project. | |

**Narrative response:**

The Food and Agricultural Systems Team (FAST) at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) extends its sincere gratitude to Altai Consulting for the rigorous and constructive evaluation of the AGSTA project. We appreciate the depth of the analysis, the breadth of the consultations carried out across IUCN, donor, and partner stakeholders, and the dual field missions to Rwanda and Vietnam, which enriched the evidence base.

FAST welcomes the evaluation's recognition of AGSTA's catalytic role in shaping IUCN's strategic positioning on Food and Agricultural Systems (FAS). The establishment of FAST, the integration of agriculture as one of the eight institutional priorities within the IUCN Programme 2026–2029, and the adoption of Motion 002 at the IUCN World Conservation Congress represent foundational institutional shifts that AGSTA was specifically designed to enable. These achievements have positioned IUCN as a credible and increasingly influential actor in global food systems discussions.

At the same time, we fully accept the evaluation's candid assessment that AGSTA's achievements remain stronger at the institutional and output level than at the level of country-level uptake, scaling, and field-level transformation. We recognise that several factors contributed to this , including a deliberately exploratory and catalytic design, modest country-level budgets relative to the scope, an HQ-centred coordination model, late and under-resourced MEL, and limited co-design with country teams at inception. The evaluation captures these dynamics with precision, and FAST considers these findings highly valuable for informing the next phase of programming.

As the recommendations primarily concern elements rooted in the original project design and implementation approach, and given that the evaluation was conducted at project closure, most recommendations could not be operationalised within AGSTA itself. Nevertheless, FAST fully recognises their relevance and has already begun integrating them into the design of next-phase initiatives, notably the FFEM-funded Solnaterre project and the emerging AGSTA follow-up pipeline. The table below outlines how each recommendation is being taken forward.

Several recommendations are already being addressed at the institutional level beyond the AGSTA project itself. In relation to partnership development and engagement strategies (SR4), FAST has substantially formalised strategic collaborations, including through Memoranda of Understanding with FAO, CGIAR, and the Global Alliance for Animal Health (GAHP), as well as through active participation in platforms such as the Agroecology Coalition and CA4SH. These partnerships include provisions for joint project development, shared ownership, and collaborative resource mobilisation, thereby strengthening pathways for uptake and scaling.

Regarding knowledge product uptake and localisation (OR3), FAST has increasingly focused on embedding tools and methodologies within broader partnerships and collaborative initiatives to promote meaningful adoption and practical application. This approach is already being implemented through initiatives such as the Landscape and Health Management Framework (LHMF), where engagement with institutional users and implementation partners is helping ensure that tools respond to operational needs and policy priorities. Discussions with partners at global, regional, and national levels remain ongoing and promising.

FAST partially agrees with the recommendation concerning systematic engagement of IUCN Commissions during the project design phase (SR5). While Commissions and thematic teams should indeed be considered strategically from the outset and engaged early around thematic priorities and opportunities, FAST notes that Commissions cannot generally contribute substantively to proposal development without dedicated resources. FAST therefore considers that Commissions should be consulted and informed during design, with formal engagement and contractual collaboration taking place once funding has been secured and implementation begins.

Finally, FAST notes that several operational recommendations (OR1–OR4), particularly those relating to sequencing of deliverables, uptake planning, and MEL integration, will become fully actionable within the context of future FAST-managed projects. The team is committed to ensuring that these mechanisms are systematically embedded into the design, governance, implementation, and monitoring arrangements of the next project phase.

| Evaluation Recommendations | IUCN Management Response | Key actions in response | Intended Result | Responsible unit | Timeframe | Status (for tracking) | Comment (for tracking) |
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| *[List each recommendation from the report, one per row.]* | *[Accepted, Partially accepted, or Not accepted and justification]* | *[Actions to respond should be SMART (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**imebound)]* | *[What is the intended result of the action you plan to take? Include indicators that will demonstrate]* | *[Responsible unit/position , do not include specific staff names ]* | *[Date by which the result should be achieved.]* | *[Has the result been achieved?]*<br>*Not started*<br>*Partially achieved*<br>*Fully achieved* | |
| *SR1. Prioritise depth over breadth by focusing on a limited number of countries with high political traction and delivery capacity.* | **Accepted:** The next-phase pipeline already concentrates engagement on fewer countries with strong political traction and delivery capacity, building on AGSTA foundations - notably the FFEM-funded Solnaterre project (Rwanda and India), which applies AGSTA tools and methodologies in a focused set of geographies rather than expanding country coverage. The FAST will carry this principle into the | -- Concentrate next-phase engagement on a limited set of high-traction countries (e.g. Rwanda and India under Solnaterre)<br><br>-- Apply readiness criteria (policy alignment, government champions, office capacity, co-financing potential) in country selection<br><br>-- Build on existing AGSTA pilot relationships rather than expanding country coverage | A focused country portfolio that generates proof-of-concept and reduces the fragmentation observed in Phase 1. | FAST, Regional Offices | During the design and inception of the next phase | *In progress* | |

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| | design of the next phase. | | | | | | |
| *SR2. Redraft the ToC to include assumptions, reflect FAS' phased delivery model and define explicit external adoption pathways.* | **Accepted:** The next-phase pipeline already aims at including deeper ToC with clearer assumptions, delivery model and external adoption pathways (eg the FFEM-funded Solnaterre project and the AGSTA new phase project concept). The FAST will continue carrying this principle into the design of the next project phase and other project proposals | -- Include assumptions (political alignment, institutional readiness) explicit<br><br>-- Define external adoption pathways and measurable milestones in future project ToC | A clarified change logic guiding institutional alignment, with further refinement to strengthen external adoption pathways. | FAST, MEL Team | During the design of the next phase | *In progress* | |
| *SR3. Develop an outcome-oriented partnership and engagement strategy to amplify reach and scale impact.* | **Accepted:** An MoU with CGIAR has been signed and the MoU with FAO is near finalisation, both including a workplan, providing a basis for more structured partnerships. The final evaluation calls also for an outcome- | -- Complete and sign MoU with CGIAR and FAO<br><br>-- Develop joint workplans with FAO and CGIAR with defined deliverables and shared accountability | A network of formalised partnerships providing structured pathways for collaboration, co-investment, and scaling. | FAST, IUCN Senior Management | Institutional partnerships secured by Q6. Integration of in new projects during the design of the next phase | *In progress* | |

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| | oriented partnership strategy beyond these agreements, which the FAST will develop in the next project phase. | -- Develop an outcome-oriented partnership strategy with selection criteria and formal agreements in the next phase | | | | | |
| *SR4. Systematise collaboration with IUCN Commissions and thematic teams at design phase to support prioritisation, credibility, and uptake.* | **Partially accepted:** The FAST agrees that collaboration with IUCN Commissions and thematic teams should be planned from the design phase, but notes that Commissions cannot work on project proposals development, without associated resources. They will therefore be kept in mind from design and formally engaged and contracted as relevant once funding is secured. | -- Identify thematic priorities and potential Commission/thematic-team engagement at the project design phase<br><br>-- Keep Commissions informed from design, with formal engagement and contracting once funding is secured<br><br>-- Link Commission engagement to funded country pilots to ground global work in practice | Strengthened technical robustness, legitimacy, and uptake of AGSTA outputs through systematic, well-resourced cross-team and Commission collaboration. | FAST, IUCN Commissions (SSC, WCEL, CEM, WCPA), Thematic Teams (Biodiversity Policy, Science, Economics, Environmental Law Centre etc) | During the potential next phase | *In progress* | |

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| *SR5. Formalise a co-design process with country teams at inception to align expectations and capitalise on local opportunities.* | **Accepted:** The FAST agrees with the importance to integrate structured co-design process at the inception of the next project phase and other projects design. This is to align expectations, clarify roles, and embed country ownership from the outset , directly responding to the mixed ownership observed in Phase 1. FAST already initiated participatory co-design processes for FFEM-funded Solnaterre project design, and new ASTA phase 2 concept design. | -- Convene joint design workshops with country and regional heads of programme prior to the next phase project design and other project development<br><br>-- Co-define national entry points and annual prioritisation of deliverables based on local demand and absorptive capacity<br><br>-- Develop a light adaptation protocol clarifying what can be modified, decision-making pathways, and flexible resource access<br><br>-- Embed feedback loops between country teams and HQ in annual project cycles | Strengthened country ownership, improved relevance to national policy windows, and the capacity for country teams to lead on adaptation and uptake. | FAST, Regional Offices (ESARO, ARO, ORMACC, PACO, EURO), Country Offices | During the potential next phase | *In progress* | |