



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

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Priorities for FAOs Work in the Region for 2016-17

INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT, BACKGROUND

1. FAO's Medium-Term Plan¹ (MTP) 2014-17 sets out the Strategic Objectives (SOs) and Outcomes for achievement by Members and the international community with support from FAO. The MTP covers a period of four years and is reviewed every two years. Input from FAO Regional Conferences in 2014 provided a key element in this review.
2. The MTP provides the programmatic basis for preparing the two-year Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), which contains the results framework with indicators and target, and the quantification of cost. The MTP 2014-17 (reviewed) and PWB 2016-17 was recommended by the Council in March 2015 for approval by the Conference in June 2015.
3. The purpose of this paper is to seek informal feedback on priority areas for FAO's work in the Europe and Central Asia Region during 2016-17.
4. This document has three sections: (1) the updated trends and challenges of the region, (2) suggestions for priority areas for 2016-17 and (3) conclusions and next steps.

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

5. The progressive integration process of Europe and Central Asia countries in the past few years, has, *inter alia*, resulted in: (i) an increased number of countries that have joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and regional trade agreements such as the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and (ii) an increased number of countries with policies and regulations in the process of alignment with the EU (both, candidates countries and countries from the neighborhood instruments). Thus several Governments in the region have identified technical and policy support to national institutions in the framework of international and regional organizations and agreements as a

¹ [Medium Term Plan 2014-2017 \(reviewed\) and Programme of Work and Budget 2016 – 2017.](#)

main priority area of work under their respective CPFs (e.g. Albania, Armenia, Georgia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo²).

6. The increased trade of goods and services poses an increased risk to food safety and animal and plant health in the Region (transboundary animal and plant diseases). As such, animal health, food safety and plant protection have been addressed as major areas for FAO support under CPFs with Armenia, Georgia, Belarus Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

7. Furthermore, population and income growth has led to a change in consumption patterns, for which current agriculture systems are not adequately prepared (as stated during the FAO ICN2 in 2015). Some countries in the Region are still vulnerable. In addition, increasing obesity is leading to higher social costs for governments. As a response of these challenges, consumer protection and contributions to food security and sustainable food systems are priority areas identified for FAO assistance in the CPFs with Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

8. The transition from collective to individual land tenure is also leading to increased social disparities in rural areas in the region. Significant challenges are (i) higher levels of unemployment and poverty and (ii) gender inequalities and obstacles for rural women's empowerment. As a consequence of this, the rural population is migrating from rural to urban areas. In order to tackle these challenges, poverty in rural areas, gender disparities and unemployment have been identified in CPFs of countries such as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

9. Climate change and its consequences – such as land degradation – and growing natural hazards affecting food and agriculture systems in the region, contributing to the increase of risks on food security, sustainable development and poverty eradication. Increasing emergencies such as floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Albania during 2014 and 2015 as well as droughts in other countries and land degradation require responses from the affected countries as it threatens the environment and livelihoods. In this regard countries of the region included Disaster Risk Management and adaptation to Climate Change as priority areas in their respective CPFs, e.g. Kosovo⁵ and Kyrgyzstan identified disaster preparedness as major area for FAO's assistance.

10. The increase of food and feed demand, as well as a general loss of biodiversity and ecosystems resulting from unsustainable agricultural practices, exacerbate the negative impacts of climate change and decrease the resilience of rural production systems and value chains. As such, increased resilience of livelihoods and technical support to build sustainable agricultural systems are two major areas for FAO assistance requested by countries in the region under CPFs; Belarus, Moldova, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are among the countries that have requested such assistance.

11. Proper monitoring and/or evaluation of any action implemented under the above mentioned fields, requires a minimum set of core data. The Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics responds to this challenge. In this context FAO provides

² References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

support to priority countries in the region (e.g. Armenia) for the improvement of national agriculture and rural statistics policies and frameworks.

12. Migration from rural areas is an increasing challenge, particularly in Central Asia. For example in Tajikistan annual remittances constitute about 50 percent of GDP and the estimation is that out of a population of 8.1 million, 1.5 million people are working abroad. Migration has a lot of political, economic and social implications and has a serious effect on agricultural and rural development as well as on the wellbeing of population.

13. Taking into account continuing globalization and regional integration, it is necessary to review FAO's work in the region in order to ensure challenges are adequately addressed through a multidisciplinary approach that targets governance, strategies and policies in order to promote a more efficient and demand-based enabling environment and support agricultural development in the region.

PRIORITIES AND FOCUS AREAS OF WORK FOR THE 2016-17 BIENNIUM

14. The priorities for FAO's work in the region during the 2014-15 biennium, including two regional initiatives, are set out in the background document for Session 2.

15. In light of the trends listed above and based on experience in 2014 in particular with the Regional Initiatives, priorities for FAO's work in the region can be restated as follows:

- a) Effective policies in support of enhanced sustainable and inclusive growth for small-scale farmers
- b) Enhanced policies and institutions in support of regional and global trade integration
- c) Sustainable natural resource management including adaptation of climate change
- d) Strengthening Food Security and Nutrition

A: Effective policies in support of enhanced sustainable and inclusive growth for small-scale farmers

16. The fragmented farm structure in parts of the region requires strong emphasis on supporting small-scale farmers and improving their access to markets, establish an enabling environment and adequate policies for their support as well as the relevant capacity development of the institutional framework. The regional priority contributes to Strategic Objective 3 – *Reduction of Rural Poverty* – and comprises of support to rural poor, access to opportunities for rural poor and social protection.

17. The Regional Initiative *Empowering smallholders and family farms in Europe and Central Asia* addresses this priority. It focuses on both the institution and the community level and working with partners to: a) increase participation of farmers and rural communities in national development; b) enhance sustainable and inclusive growth of rural economies, and c) improve sustainable management of natural resources.

18. During the 2014-15 biennium the initiative covers Armenia, Albania, Georgia, Moldova, FYR Macedonia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

19. Specific outputs under the Regional Initiative include:

- *Innovative practices for sustainable agriculture production*
- Organizational and institutional capacities of public and private institutions are strengthened
- Support for strengthening rural institutions and organizations and the empowerment of rural poor
- Support the promotion of pro-poor policy approaches to policies and programmes which improve access to and sustainable management of natural resources
- Support innovations in rural Service Provision and infrastructure development accessible to the rural poor
- Cross-sectorial policy advice and capacity development for the definition of gender equitable and sustainable rural development and poverty reduction strategies

20. Other areas of work under this priority include improving rural livelihoods and employment and preventing distress migration. Migration from rural areas remains an important challenge to address in the Region and alternatives are needed to create new opportunities and incentives for the youth to engage in both farm and non-farm rural activities in their own communities and countries.

21. FAO's work in the region would also engage in (i) on- and off-farm employment opportunities through various ways of income diversification, and also by promoting (agro) entrepreneurship; (ii) marketing of high-value local products, fostering community development and supporting rural tourism; (iii) capacities enhanced on land tenure, rural development policy, strategy and programme development including land consolidation programs for employment creation.

B: Enhanced policies and institutions in support of regional and global integration

22. The progressive integration processes of the countries in the region and thus the fostering of trade, trade integration and provision of standards and food safety regulations as well as value chain development requires specific attention.

23. The Regional Initiative *Agrifood Trade and Regional Integration* responds to the deepening regional and global trade integration in Europe and Central Asia and aims at increasing regional and national capacities in order to deal effectively with the challenges posed by greater trade integration. The Regional Initiative focuses on developing better evidence on trade implications, improving the capacity of countries to use this evidence, facilitating neutral fora and dialogues on trade agreements, supporting design and implementation of appropriate policies at country level. Focus countries of the initiative in 2014-15 include the Republic of Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

24. During 2014, the Regional Initiative focused on a few substantial topics. However, there is room for the expansion of the initiative in the following fields:

- Areas that deal with the standard-setting bodies mentioned in the WTO Agreements such as the Codex Alimentarius in the field of food safety; the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in the field of plant health including sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues, and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in the case of animal health.
- Improved access of rural producers into national and international markets.
- Harmonization of national biosafety regulations in the region with WTO agreements.

25. The Regional Initiative contributes to Strategic Objective 4 – *Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems* – and will help countries to be better prepared to formulate international agreements, mechanisms and standards that promote more efficient and inclusive trade and markets.

26. Specific outputs of this Regional Initiative include:

- Food safety considering the updating food safety legislation, integrating risk analysis principles, improving regulatory capacity of authorities and strengthening food safety services and infrastructure, increasing compliance of food chains operators.
- International frameworks related to food safety, countries' capacities will be strengthened in participating in the Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the World Organization for Animal Health
- Under the field of trade policy, the following elements will be addressed:
 - (i) international trade agreements awareness based on analytical work on agreements in the Region; (ii) policy advice on appropriate policies at national level;
 - (iii) Promotion of the dialogue on global and regional trade issues and on single market issues; and (iv) assistance to the Agricultural and Trade Policy Expert Network activities, including studies, publications and conferences on trade-related issues including topics on food security and import substitution.
- Under the field of food security, one key element the RI will address is analytical work on how food security can be achieved and ensured in the region in a sustainable manner.

C: Sustainable natural resource management including adaptation to climate change

27. Sustainable natural resource management including adaptation of climate change is a key challenge for the region. This includes development opportunities for aquaculture, sustainable forestry management, climate change adaptation, desertification in rural areas and watershed management. The work under this priority aims to increase the productivity and sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fishery in Europe and Central Asia. This priority contributes to Strategic Objective 2 – *Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner*. As demonstrated by the CPFs,

this is considered one of the most significant types of FAO work in Europe and Central Asia in 2016-17.

28. The experience from the implementation in 2014 demonstrated that the products and services delivered within this regional priority are important for the region and have so far been linked to other areas of work (see other areas of work as outlined in the document [ERC/14/7 Rev 1](#)) such as dealing with control of animal disease, plant pests and food safety hazards as well as natural resource management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation. In the next biennium increased emphasis will be given to sustainable agricultural growth which is equally valid topic for both developed and transition economies in the region.

29. The work under this area of work would focus on promoting sustainable production with the challenge of land degradation and climate change and would be linked to Strategic Objective 2, Outcome 1 - *practices that increase and improve agricultural sector production in a sustainable manner adopted by producers and natural resource managers.*

30. Specific outputs of this area of work include:

- Support to production and protection include Integrated Pest Management, organic agriculture and sustainable crop management including soil management.
- Promote wood energy and non-wood forest products that contribute to the livelihoods of rural people, forest restoration and afforestation as means of watershed management and erosion control, forest genetic resources conservation and management for climate change adaptation purposes and control of trans-boundary plant diseases to reduce the negative impact of climate change.
- Support climate change adaptation and risk management, interdisciplinary climate-smart agriculture pilot practices on community level, land degradation (e.g. UNCCD Land Degradation Neutrality), enhanced agricultural ecosystems.

31. Other areas of work under this priority will be on strengthening the governance of stakeholders in the transition to sustainable agricultural sector production systems focusing on national governance frameworks that foster sustainable agricultural production and natural resource management. Support will also be provided for evidence-based decisions in the planning and management of the agricultural sectors and natural resources such as data collection, analyses, application and dissemination. Priority work in this area includes the preparation of sector reviews on recent status and development potentials of fisheries and aquaculture and to raise the attention of decision makers, capacity building in forest resources assessment and forest management planning and the provision of technical assistance for planning and efficient management of watersheds.

32. Priority fields within livestock production are sustainable management and support the adoption and promotion of modern and sustainable livestock production practices.

33. Priority fields within fisheries and aquaculture are (i) alternative aquaculture production technologies to ensure sustainability in fish farming, (ii) protection and conservation of endangered and threatened native fish species and supply of quality seed and feed in

aquaculture, (iii) rearing of fish larvae and alternative production technologies, (iv) promotion of production technologies in compliance with international markets, (v) support for the management of marine living resources by the promotion of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the mitigation and prevention of damages caused by Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

34. Strengthening agricultural knowledge management capacities that result in better governance of agricultural innovations and in increased access, availability and sharing of knowledge in the innovation process at national and regional levels.

D: Strengthening food security and nutrition

35. Although all countries in the region have made considerable progress in reducing the incidence of hunger, there are still issues of food insecurity to address, largely caused by natural and man-made disasters. The increase of natural disasters in the region in recent times has demonstrated that increasing resilience is important. The Regional Priority in this context contributes to Strategic Objective 1 *Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition* and Strategic Objective 5 *Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises*.

36. Food security related work can be divided into two main fields. First, the development and management of inclusive governance and coordination mechanisms such as food security strategies and programs as well as participation in related technical working groups. The second priority area relates to support evidence based decision making by increasing capacities on analysis and increase availability of food security related data and information.

37. Food security related work will concentrate on policies, investment, programmes, legal frameworks such as the Food Security Law and Food Security and Nutrition Program. Focus countries for the implementation of this element will be Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Furthermore in both countries work is foreseen on further developing and using food security information systems.

38. Work related to Strategic Objective 5 on threats and crises shows an increasing role in FAO's work in the region. Priority will be given to reducing risks and vulnerability and strengthening preparedness and crisis response to natural hazards and disasters such as frosts, droughts or floods, with local communities and farmers being the most vulnerable ones.

Cross-cutting issues: statistics, gender mainstreaming and nutrition

39. Addressing the problems and challenges synthesized within the Regional Priorities for the Region requires the consideration of cross-cutting issues such as statistics, gender mainstreaming and nutrition.

40. **Objective 6** of the Strategic Framework facilitates this work focusing on delivery of FAO's technical quality, knowledge and services, including in the areas of statistics and the cross-cutting themes of gender, governance and nutrition. In terms of statistics and country

capacity to use, collect, analyze and disseminate data priority will be put on the following issues:

- Support for dissemination of the new Programme for World Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020) in the region.
- Support for planned agricultural censuses in the region; Kyrgyzstan (in 2016) and Kazakhstan (in 2017), which has already started in 2015. Support to the agricultural census in Russia (in 2016) will be provided if requested by the country.
- Support for activities of the “Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics” in the region. CIS is one of the regions for implementation of the Global Strategy.
- As regards gender statistics: Improving data quality and availability for evidence based policy-making & knowledge building (Social protection for rural population).

41. Regarding quality services and coherent approaches to work on gender equality and women’s empowerment, priority will be placed on capacity development in gender mainstreaming across work in the different strategic objectives and economic empowerment of rural women in Central Asia.

42. Nutrition has become an increasingly important area for FAO’s work in the region following the outcomes of ICN2 and related Council decision that designated it as a cross-cutting theme under Objective 6. The substantive areas to be covered for nutrition include overall technical leadership for FAO’s work on nutrition; policy and operational coordination around nutrition in the UN system; facilitation of mainstreaming nutrition across the Strategic Objectives; and technical support to resource mobilization and communication in support of nutrition.

Annex 1

FAO Results framework – Main components (see page 6 in C 2015/3)

FAO's vision

A world free of hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

Three Global Goals of Members:

- eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, progressively ensuring a world in which
- people at all times have sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life;
- elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all, with
- increased food production, enhanced rural development and sustainable livelihoods; and
- sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

Strategic Objectives

1. Contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable more inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises

Additional Objective

6. Technical quality, knowledge and services

Cross-cutting themes

Gender
Governance
Nutrition (new for 2016-17)

Core Functions

1. Facilitate and support countries in the development and implementation of normative and standard-setting instruments, such as international agreements, codes of conduct, technical standards and others
2. Assemble, analyse, monitor and improve access to data and information, in areas related to FAO's mandate
3. Facilitate, promote and support policy dialogue at global, regional and country levels
4. Advise and support capacity development at country and regional level to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate evidence-based policies, investments and programmes
5. Advise and support activities that assemble, disseminate and improve the uptake of knowledge, technologies and good practices in the areas of FAO's mandate
6. Facilitate partnerships for food security and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, between governments, development partners, civil society and the private sector
7. Advocate and communicate at national, regional and global levels, in areas of FAO's mandate

Functional Objectives

Outreach
Information Technology
FAO Governance, oversight and direction
Efficient and effective administration

FAO's results framework is based on a 'results chain' model which links objectives, outcomes and outputs as illustrated in *Figure 2*. Three levels of results contribute to the *Global Goals of members*:

- *Strategic Objectives* express the development outcomes in countries, regions and globally. They are expected to be achieved over a long-term (ten-year) timeframe by Members with FAO's contributions.
- *Organizational Outcomes* describe changes in the country, regional or global enabling environment and in capacities available to achieve a specific Strategic Objective.
- *Outputs* are FAO's direct contributions to Organizational Outcomes. They result from the delivery of FAO's interventions at the national, regional and global levels, using both regular and extra budgetary resources.

Achievement of results is facilitated by three additional elements that help to focus and make FAO's work more effective:

- *Cross-cutting themes* are approaches and areas of work that are integrated across the Strategic Objectives.
- *Core Functions* are the critical means of action to be employed by FAO to achieve results.
- *Functional Objectives* provide the enabling environment for FAO's work.
- While the framework has been designed from the top down, that is by the design of outcomes needed to achieve each objective, and outputs to attain each outcome, the links as they relate to delivery of results are planned and implemented from the bottom up.