



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



# ASEAN and FAO cooperation

WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS  
SHARED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
AND FOOD SECURITY GOALS

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has a rich history of engagement and cooperation with the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), providing policy advice, analysis and technical assistance in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry, natural resources management and food security in its commitment to support resilient livelihoods and enhance food security for the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

# PARTNERS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

**A**SEAN-FAO cooperation on food security, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and sustainable development was first formalized through an exchange of letters between the ASEAN Secretariat and FAO from 1999-2000. Since then, FAO has been actively collaborating with ASEAN in a number of regional projects and activities.

A Memorandum of Understanding between ASEAN and FAO was signed in 2013, under which the two Organizations agreed to strengthen cooperation in agriculture and forestry with the goal of reducing



hunger in the region and improving food security, with a particular focus on collaboration in the areas of transboundary animal disease control, food safety, nutrition, food security and bioenergy development. In the same year two ASEAN Member States - Brunei Darussalam and Singapore - became members of FAO. Now all ten ASEAN Member States are FAO Members.

FAO's ongoing support to ASEAN includes:

- 1. Regional cooperation programme on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases (HPED) in South and Southeast Asia.** Livestock sector development plays a major role in food security

and poverty alleviation in ASEAN. FAO has been supporting the ASEAN Member States in implementing a cooperative programme at individual and institutional levels to prevent and control transboundary animal diseases and emerging zoonoses to ensure food security, food safety and livelihoods.

- 2. Bioenergy and food security in ASEAN.** Many ASEAN Member States are encouraging the development of green renewable energy, including bioenergy, to achieve a range of national development objectives. FAO is assisting ASEAN in developing a regional Bioenergy and Food Security approach to assist policy makers in managing the trade-offs associated with bioenergy development and to avoid competition between energy, natural resources and food security.
- 3. Development of the ASEAN Integrated Food Security (AIFS) Framework and Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security-2015-2020 (SPA-FS).** FAO collaborated with the ASEAN Secretariat in developing this framework by providing technical inputs and advice through participation in technical meetings and jointly organizing forums to deliberate on food security issues in the ASEAN region that arise from high and volatile food prices and identifying options for regional cooperation in tackling them.
- 4. Strengthening the capacity of ASEAN in coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and the Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security.** FAO is providing technical assistance to the ASEAN Secretariat to strengthen the capacity of its staff to adequately and timely undertake the assigned coordination and monitoring functions to ensure effective implementation of the AIFS and SPA-FS.
- 5. Development of vision, objectives and goals for ASEAN cooperation in food, agriculture and forestry towards 2025.** FAO is providing technical support to ASEAN in developing its vision, objectives, goals and priorities for cooperation among its Member States in food, agriculture and forestry during 2015-2025. The aim of this exercise is to produce a comprehensive, strategic document to promote regional cooperation and integration in food, agriculture and forestry sectors among ASEAN countries as part of ASEAN's overall goal of strengthening economic cooperation among its Member States.

# A HISTORY OF COLLABORATION WITH ASEAN MEMBER STATES

## Brunei Darussalam

Brunei Darussalam became an FAO Member State in June 2013. Previously, the country collaborated with FAO on several projects specific to the ASEAN, including a major EU-funded initiative to strengthen the capacity of both the ASEAN and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in their efforts to coordinate regional approaches to fight Highly

## Cambodia

Cambodia has a long history of technical collaboration with FAO and hosts an FAO Country Representation Office in the capital Phnom Penh. Since 2009, in collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, FAO has delivered more than US\$ 41 million in technical support through the work of 43 national projects. Focusing on policy support, FAO projects have covered a



Pathogenic and Emerging Diseases. FAO helped improve capacities for prevention, control and eradication of these diseases in countries still struggling with the ongoing H5N1-crisis, the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). By establishing regional epidemiology and diagnosis networks, FAO helped provide standardized training, supported information sharing and promoted exchange of technical experts. It also supported leading laboratories for three priority diseases: foot and mouth disease, *pestes des petits ruminants* and HPAI. Managerial, technical and field staff of veterinary services, animal health authorities, and animal health services in member countries also benefited from a training and mentoring programme to strengthen their capacity for better cross-border coordination in disease control.

wide range of subjects, from improving child nutrition and food security to irrigation management to tackling avian influenza and other emergency responses. The work has also concentrated on sanitary services, poverty reduction, mitigating the effects of climate change and improving resilience, sericulture and fish quality control.

## Indonesia

Indonesia has a long history of technical collaboration with FAO and hosts an FAO Country Representation Office in the capital Jakarta. Since 2009, in collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, FAO has delivered nearly US\$ 92 million in technical support through the work of 36 national projects. FAO has focused on efforts to improve post-harvesting of



rice, quarantine control of invasive alien species, rabies control, chili production including processing through a value chain approach, controlling shrimp-related diseases, landscape Farmer Field Schools – Integrated Pest Management and pesticide management systems, HPAI control, fisheries, aquaculture and coastal community development, UNREDD+ and emergency projects.

### **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

The Lao People's Democratic Republic works closely with FAO on food security and hosts an FAO Country Representation Office in the capital Vientiane. Since 2009, in collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, FAO has delivered more than US\$ 11 million in support through the work of 28 national projects. Ranging from policy support, to strategy development and practical action related to agricultural development and enhanced food security, FAO projects have covered a wide range of subjects, including development of a national nutrition policy, strategy and plan of action, the 2010 agricultural census, improvements in agricultural statistics, integrated pest management in a range of crops, home gardens and insect farming for improved nutrition, enhancement of agro-biodiversity, control of HPAI, and development of fisheries and aquaculture. FAO also assisted in the development of a plan of action on disaster risk reduction and management in agriculture, and it has implemented emergency response projects to assist in recovery from natural disasters such as floods.

### **Malaysia**

FAO and Malaysia have collaborated on numerous projects, and both recently signed a letter of intent to establish a liaison office in the country. Malaysia has extensive experience in food and agriculture issues, including agricultural technologies as well as land management, and its expertise will aid African countries to overcome extreme poverty and hunger through South-South Cooperation projects. The Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) is currently contributing to the development of these sectors in Brunei Darussalam, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria and Suriname.

Reducing post-harvest food losses along the food supply chain is a top priority for both Malaysia and FAO, and the country has launched a programme aiming to reduce waste and increase agricultural productivity by 40 percent by 2020. Looking to the future, Malaysia has asked for FAO's technical support in capacity building training to build resilience to the effects of climate change on agriculture, specifically tropical peat land.

### **Myanmar**

Myanmar hosts an FAO Country Representation Office in Yangon, and since 2009, in collaboration with the authorities and other stakeholders, FAO has delivered more than US\$ 40 million through 55 national projects. Total expenditure from 1978 to 2013 was more than US\$ 197 million.

The interventions and technical assistance have resulted in support of technology adoption for sustainable food security, Agri-Census, reduction of post-harvest losses in agriculture, hybrid rice development, oil crops development, improvements to dairy farming and animal feeding strategies, improved animal health and production, oil palm research and development, forest monitoring systems, improved market access for fish and fisheries products, small-scale aquaculture and fisheries livelihood in coastal mangrove ecosystems, mangrove management, formulation of a National Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation, support to marginalized landless poor and vulnerable women, avian influenza and emergency support responses in Rakhine and Kachine.

### **The Philippines**

The Philippines works closely with FAO and hosts an FAO Country Representation Office in the capital Manila. Since 2009, in collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, FAO has delivered more than US\$ 43 million in technical support through the work of 53 national projects. FAO continues to work closely with the Government in agricultural recovery efforts following the devastating effects of Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda). Immediately after the typhoon hit, in response to a request by the government, FAO began distributing rice production packages in time for the December/January planting season, enabling farmers to bring in their first crop without skipping one harvesting season. To date, FAO has provided more than 100 000 rice and corn farming households (some 500 000 people) with certified rice seed, corn seed, fertilizer and hand tools. In order to further build resilience and make accessing markets easier, FAO is providing water- and pest-resistant storage containers to protect farmers' seeds, along with drying nets and post-harvest equipment, and is training farmers in how to reduce post-harvest losses.



## Singapore

Singapore became an official FAO Member State in June 2013. In the years preceding, the country collaborated with FAO on several projects, including a partnership between FAO and ASEAN countries to implement the ASEAN AIFS and the SPA-FS to facilitate joint regional efforts and responses to food insecurity in the region. There is potential for future partnerships between FAO and Singapore in several areas of work. Although it is not an agricultural country, and imports 90 percent of its food, Singapore is pioneering vertical farming systems to complement more traditional systems. FAO and Singapore are committed to boosting food security and food safety in the country as well as in the wider region by using vertical farming and similar techniques in land-scarce urban environments.

Singapore has also focused many resources on research and development and educational skills, which have become increasingly important in SSC projects.

## Thailand

Thailand has a long history of collaboration with FAO at the national level and is also host to FAO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Since 2009, in collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, FAO has delivered more than US\$ 4.7 million in technical support through the work of 18 national projects. The collaborative efforts have covered a wide range of technical areas, including policy and strategic planning support for irrigation,

sustainable forest management, responses to climate change, food safety, beef productivity, highland livelihood development and aquaculture information management systems.

## Viet Nam

Since 1978, FAO and Viet Nam have been working closely on issues concerning food security. Since 2009, in collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, FAO has delivered more than US\$ 24 million in technical support through the work of 40 national projects.

These collaborative efforts have covered a wide range of technical areas. They include work on agricultural restructuring policies, new rural development, improving rice seed source and production, integrated food security strategies for children and vulnerable groups, food safety information systems, support in the floriculture sector, assistance with the control of unknown diseases in the shrimp sector, forest harvesting for poverty reduction, rabies control, livestock policy analysis and monitoring systems, efforts to counter HPAI, integrated management of lagoon activities, elimination of Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) pesticides, climate change adaptation and UNREDD.

# FAO'S REGIONAL INITIATIVES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC



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In line with FAO's Strategic Framework, the Organization has implemented several Regional Initiatives to mobilize resources and deliver results on the priority areas agreed upon with its partners. Several ASEAN countries are collaborating with FAO on its Regional Initiatives in Asia and the Pacific.

## *Asia and the Pacific's Zero Hunger Challenge*

This initiative provides technical support to national governments for a) formulating and operationalizing national food security policies including national action plans to achieve zero hunger, b) improving capacity for measurement and calculation of undernourishment, and c) implementing policies and strategies to improve child nutrition and reduce stunting.

Countries in the Asia-Pacific region are moving forward with national Zero Hunger campaigns to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2025. In December 2013, a Regional Guiding Framework for Asia and the Pacific was developed and endorsed by the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific. The Regional Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) was presented by FAO's Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative Hiroyuki Konuma at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry in September 2014. In ASEAN, Myanmar launched a National Zero Hunger Challenge and has asked for assistance from FAO to develop a national plan of action. Meanwhile, Viet Nam has committed to join the ZHC and other countries are also considering joining.

## Asia and the Pacific's Regional Rice Initiative

The aims of this Initiative are to a) allow for innovative and sustainable practices by rice farmers and producers through the effective provision and utilization of rice ecosystem services and goods, all in the context of the overarching Save and Grow paradigm which advocates for producing more and better with fewer inputs; b) build a knowledge base and evidence for resource use and production efficiency through the adoption of sustainable rice-based ecosystem approaches; and c) realize food-secure, better nourished and prosperous rice farmers and consumers in the Asia-Pacific region through the formulation and implementation of rice strategies at country level.

In a number of regions in the Philippines, more than 400 farmers were trained on the Save and Grow approach. Preliminary results show an average 30 percent increase in yield and over 30 percent reduction in costs. This has led to a near 60 percent increase in net income for local farmers. In Indonesia, farmers increased their rice yields by 20 percent, though input cost savings were variable. Returns on investments increased by 57 percent, primarily due to higher farm gate prices for certified-organic rice, intended for the export market.



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## Asia and the Pacific's Blue Growth Initiative

In Asia, fish currently supplies about 20 percent of the protein in people's diets. Due to the increasing population and economic growth, by 2030 fish consumption in Asia is estimated to surge by 30 percent. Aquaculture is seen as the only way to meet the increasing demand due to the stagnant production from capture fisheries. This Regional Initiative contributes to the sustainable growth of aquaculture in Asia, foreseen to increase 60 percent by 2030 by supporting Member Governments to effectively address the key issues in producing more with less, while safeguarding the environment. This will be done through improved governance, ecosystem approaches and participatory processes in planning and management and actions to improve implementation at different levels, which contribute to reduction of poverty, increased food security and improved nutrition of rural communities.

Under this initiative, FAO is currently assisting the Lao PDR in developing an inclusive national policy supporting the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture. Indonesia has similarly adopted a Master Plan for Economic Development based on the Blue Growth concepts. The focus is on fisheries, aquaculture of fish and seaweed, livestock, value addition, ecotourism and mangrove restoration. FAO is providing expertise and capacity building to support feasibility studies, policy development and project implementation.



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FAO has a long history of partnership with ASEAN countries, providing policy advice, analysis and technical assistance in agriculture, livestock, forestry, markets and trade, natural resources management and food security in its commitment to ensure food and nutrition security and promotion of robust and sustainable agriculture. FAO collaborates with ASEAN countries at a global level, as well as at a regional level through a number of regional initiatives, and at a country level via the national projects. Provided that agriculture, livestock and fisheries are highly dependent on specific climate conditions, moving forward FAO is looking to further strengthen its dialogue and collaboration with the ASEAN countries.

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*"We must not tolerate a situation in which a single man, woman or child is still condemned to suffer hunger in this prosperous region where there is enough food for all and the means exist to put an end to hunger. Through FAO's new strategic framework we are better prepared to respond to the needs of the Asia and Pacific region while advancing towards food security."*

***José Graziano da Silva - FAO Director-General***

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