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Family farming initiative

Family farmers key agents of sustainable development (UNDF, 2019–2028)

The issue

Agriculture is at a crossroads. It has to provide sufficient, affordable and nutritious food for a growing population amid challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, soil depletion and biodiversity loss. Family farmers play a pivotal role in feeding the planet. They produce more than 80 percent of the world's food, run diverse agricultural systems and preserve traditional food products and agro-biodiversity. They are the main agricultural investors, but often suffer from food insecurity and malnutrition, are vulnerable to shocks and lack adequate income. The United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF), 2019–2028 was launched to foster cross-sectoral policy, investment and innovation in family farming. Its main goal is to unleash the potential of family farmers as agricultural agents of change to realize sustainable food systems and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UNDF aims to establish 100 National Action Plans (NAPs) by 2024, boost the capacity of more than 60 farmer organizations and mobilize action for sustainable food systems through family farming.

The action

The Family Farming Initiative (FFI) is a multi-donor programme leveraging technical, financial and policy support to achieve the UNDF's goals. Its premise is that targeted investment, policies, programmes and capacity are needed to advance family farming and achieve sustainable food. The FFI will help countries to:

- Improve family farming policies, programmes and investment while targeting the SDGs;
- Define NAPs through consultative processes and develop projects and investments in family farming;
- Enhance the capacity of producer organizations and improve farmers' access to agricultural assets, market opportunities and public services;
- Make food systems sustainable through innovation, better productivity and local markets;
- Foster adaptation to climate change, the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources; and
- Promote gender equality in family farming.

The FFI will aid countries in assessing the contribution of family farming to their economies and to environmental sustainability and help design their NAPs. It will foster strategic investment and programmes through innovative partnerships.

The issue in numbers



80%

of the world's food is produced by family farmers



80%

of the extreme poor are rural and most depend on agriculture for their livelihoods



500 million +

farms globally are family owned

Programme targets



50

family farming National Action Plans developed



30

inter-sectoral initiatives to improve national family-farming investments, policies and programmes



100

family farmers' organizations have better access to economic and market opportunities

The budget



USD 30 million



3 years



At least

50 countries

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Expected results

The FFI will strengthen family farming as a means to achieve sustainable food systems and contribute to the 2030 Agenda. At least 50 countries will have developed NAPs in consultation with governments, family farmers and the private sector, improving family farming policies and investments, with at least 30 of those having designed and implemented strategic projects and achieved the following results in four macro areas:

- Cross-sectoral policies, programmes, projects, investments and public-private partnerships, inspired by the NAPs, to advance family farming, contributing to food security and sustainable growth;
- Enhanced entrepreneurial, organizational and communication capacity for family farmers to access markets and to promote economic opportunities, investments and territorial value chains;
- Farmer-led innovation and ecosystem services to maintain agro-biodiversity and natural resources and to promote sustainable food systems for climate adaptation and mitigation;
- Generational renewal measures and rural services focusing on youth entrepreneurship, gender equity and employment to limit distress migration.

Geographic focus

At least 50 countries, including Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, the Gambia, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Nepal, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Sierra Leone and Uruguay.

In partnership with

National and local governments; the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Programme and other United Nations agencies; specialized funds and financial institutions; regional bodies; academic institutions; regional, national and local farmer and producer organizations; civil-society organizations; the private sector



SDG contribution



PAFCIA: a shining example

In July 2018, the Central American Agricultural Council approved the Peasant, Indigenous and Afro-descendant Family Farming Policy (PAFCIA), a framework for developing local policies on family farming in the Central American Integration System (SICA) to 2030. PAFCIA (which arose from a process involving more than 22 producers' organizations representing 2.6 million farmers in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) targets a diversified, inclusive and territorial productive model, contributing to national and regional social and economic development. It gives governments the tools to support family farmers, with a focus on agro-ecological practices and sustainable natural-resource management. It is a strategic milestone, as over 2.6 million productive units are responsible for 70 percent of the region's food production.



Why invest?

The FFI will help countries to implement UNDF NAPs in order to integrate policies, programmes and investments to reduce poverty and foster access to rural services, gender equality and generational renewal. It will advocate for more investment in family farming and the optimization of financial resources and encourage investment by public and private entities. The family farming multi-donor trust fund enables resource partners to focus on NAP priorities and invest in territories that prioritize the programme's macro areas. The FFI will spur the realization of SDG-aligned goals set by governments and family farmers' organizations. This will facilitate better targeting of development priorities and the promotion of synergies between different investments and funding sources, with direct benefits for family farmers, sustainable agriculture and national development targets.

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