

Informal Consultation for Europe and Central Asia

4–5 May 2023

Background Note

Session 4

Priority areas for the work programme in the region for 2024–2025 in light of the key challenges and opportunities

Breakout session 4.1

Priority 1: Formulating effective policies, promoting innovation and digitalization, and facilitating rural livelihoods for smallholders, women and youth

Objective:

The main objective is to exchange views and collect inputs on the key challenges and opportunities in Europe and Central Asia and to provide recommendations related to the main areas of response as key inputs for the formulation of the FAO work programme 2024–2025 for the Europe and Central Asia region.

Methodology

Country representatives exchange their views on the main challenges and opportunities in the region and explore potential recommendations. The discussions focus on three questions, and the debate is facilitated by FAO staff directly involved in the design and implementation of this regional priority.

The presentation and background note of *“Session 3 - Key challenges and opportunities in the region that might affect the regional priority areas and should be addressed by the FAO work programme 2024–2025”* and of *“Session 2 - Update on FAO’s response to the multiple crises in the region”* serve as a basis for the discussion in the breakout session. The challenges and proposed response areas under Priority 1 have been summarized in Annex I.

Time: 35 minutes

Structure:

1. **Introduction by the group facilitator** (3 min)
2. **Round-table discussion** (30 min)

Guiding questions:

- What do you consider as key challenges related to Priority 1 in the context of your country or the region?
- What emphasis would you give regarding the main areas of response identified under Priority 1 in the context of your country or the region?
- Do you agree with the challenges/areas of response that are proposed in Annex I, or is there any challenge/area of response already included that you suggest de-emphasizing?

3. **Wrap-up by the group facilitator** (2 min)

Annex I

Priority 1: Formulating effective policies, promoting innovation and digitalization, and facilitating rural livelihoods for smallholders, women and youth

| Challenges | Main areas of response |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Farm structures dominated by smallholders and family farms, with limited access to resources and further constraints due to the multiple crises in the region• Limited access to digital and non-digital technologies, knowledge, innovations and investments, low input quality, low labour skills, and inequalities among members of smallholder farms• Limited access to domestic and international markets, hindered by inefficient supply chains, poor infrastructure, weak market linkages, instability of state support measures, and food safety and quality standards• Rural–urban social divide and rural areas characterized by a lack of agriculture-based livelihood options for youth, intensive outmigration to urban areas and abroad, and ageing of rural population• Deprioritization of inclusive policies due to multiple crises | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support evidence-building on the impacts of the multiple crises on smallholders and family farms and strengthen national capacities on inclusive policies• Promote community development and territorial approaches, including income generation for smallholders, access to financial resources, women's economic empowerment, and employment opportunities for rural youth• Support access to innovation through national research, extension services and rural institutions• Increase competitiveness, address land fragmentation and abandonment, and improve access to resources• Enhance resilience to climate change, shocks and crises through the promotion of preparedness, sustainable production practices, technology and access to insurance and social protection |