



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

## FAO in the United Arab Emirates Bulletin



**Transforming agrifood systems for better  
production, better nutrition, a better environment  
and a better life in the Gulf and Yemen**

**Issue #1**

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# Welcome



It gives me a great pleasure to introduce and share with you this first issue of FAO Subregional Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council States and Yemen (FAO SNG) bulletin.

We aim hereby to share and keep you informed about our programme of work in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States and Yemen. We work with a wide range of partners from the public sector, the private sector, civil society organizations, and academia, leaving no one behind, to support the transformation of agrifood systems so as to become more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life.

In this issue, we will introduce the major programmes/projects under implementation, with a focus on blue transformation.

However, after more than 31 years of service, and working the past three and half years as FAO's Subregional Coordinator for GCC States and Yemen and FAO Representative in the United Arab Emirates, my work with FAO is completed. As always, our bulletin is tailored to mobile phones, and easily shareable so please feel free to forward to your contacts.

Enjoy the read and stay tuned on social media.

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## About **FAO SNG**

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialized technical agency of the United Nations, established in 1945. FAO leads international efforts to defeat hunger. FAO's vision is a world free from 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. Its goal is to achieve food security for all, and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to leave active and healthy lives.

Located in Abu Dhabi, covering Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States and Yemen. It is a subsidiary office of the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa, based in Cairo, Egypt. FAO SNG was established in 2010 through a cooperation agreement between FAO and the Government of the United Arab Emirates. It is responsible for the overall planning and implementation of FAO's activities through inclusive, multistakeholder and multidisciplinary approaches. In line with the Strategic Framework 2022-2031, FAO SNG seeks to support the 2030 Agenda in the region through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life (four betters), leaving no one behind.

It provides support on technical areas, advocacy, governance, policy, and capacity development, through programme and projects upon demand from countries.

Our programme/projects cover a wide portfolio of activities implemented through a food systems approach, from production to consumption.

We apply four crosscutting accelerators, i.e., technology, innovation, data, and complements (governance, human capital, and institutions) in our programmatic interventions to accelerate impact while minimizing tradeoffs. FAO SNG serves also as a liaison office for emergency support as well as FAO global efforts such as the Hand-in-Hand initiative, which, aims to support the implementation of nationally-led, ambitious programmes to accelerate agrifood systems transformations.

## In Focus **Blue Transformation**



United Arab Emirates - FAO staff with a seller at the Waterfront in Dubai inquiring about the fish types.

### Transforming agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life in the Gulf and Yemen

Aquatic foods are contributing to dietary improvements, not just as a source of proteins, but also as a unique provider of omega-3 fatty acids and bioavailable micronutrients. Aquatic systems exhibit wide biological diversity, greater efficiency, low environmental footprint, and greenhouse gas emissions compared to land-based production systems. Aquatic systems can be transformed through innovations, policies and innovative partnerships that will support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (life below water).

FAO promotes a **“Blue Transformation”** of aquatic systems to increase efficiency and contribution to nutritious and affordable healthy diets, while fostering equitable growth, especially for communities depending on fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods and food security.

**Blue Transformation** is a targeted effort by which agencies, countries, and dependent communities, use existing and emerging knowledge, tools, and practices to secure and sustainably maximize the contribution of aquatic (both marine and inland) food systems to food security, nutrition, and affordable healthy diets for all.

Blue Transformation of aquatic systems requires a holistic and adaptive ecosystem approach, aimed at securing socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable value chains that help secure livelihoods, foster an equitable distribution of benefits, and support adequate use and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.



United Arab Emirates - Technicians at Emirate Fish Farm sample 4 days old fish larvae With FAO staff.

Blue Transformation will be achieved through actions in three main areas:

- Promoting the sustainable intensification and expansion of aquaculture to respond to the growing global demand for aquatic foods. If successful, sustainable aquaculture production will grow by at least 35 percent by 2030, especially in food deficit regions.
- Ensuring the sustainable management of all fisheries to deliver healthy stocks, restore ecosystems and secure equitable livelihoods for all, with the objective that 100 percent of marine and inland fisheries be under effective management and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing is eradicated.
- Supporting the upgrading of aquatic value chains to improve the social, economic, and environmental outcomes of aquatic food systems, by reducing food loss and waste by half by 2030, and ensuring more transparency and traceability of value chains, in order to improve access to markets and more inclusive and gender-equitable returns.



United Arab Emirates - Aerial views of different farms at Al Ain, Abu Dhabi.

From Countries

Major ongoing programme/projects



Bahrain - FAO staff in a local farm to design and develop a testing tools for data collection and survey monitoring to support the development of the Bahrain Strategic Plan for Agricultural Statistics 2021-2025.

## BAHRAIN

**Strengthening the statistical system for collection, analyse and reporting for food and agriculture** aims to enhance evidence-based planning, policy formulation, decision-making and performance monitoring for agriculture sector development interventions. The project is strengthening the capacity of staff within the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture to collect, process and analyze high quality reliable statistics on agriculture and food security to meet the needs of the decision makers in agriculture and food security. The project has contributed to the development of the draft Bahrain Strategic Plan for Agricultural Statistics 2021-2025. It is also providing capacity development and implementation of food balance sheets and on monitoring food security using SDG 2.1.1 and 2.1.2.

**Building greener and healthier cities in Bahrain** is a joint endeavour between FAO, UN Habitat and the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Agriculture. It is expected to be approved soon with the aim to promote a transition toward more sustainable and climate adapted urban systems and to improve environmental quality of cities by increasing quality and use of green public spaces with direct effects on health and well-being of the residents in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The project will strengthen capacity of key stakeholders through on the job trainings, workshops, and exchange visits/study tours.

**Brucellosis and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) surveillances in livestock of Bahrain improved the Kingdom's animal health status.** FAO provided support under the framework of self-funded project "Support to eradication of animal diseases and zoonosis and conservation of animal genetic resources in Bahrain – UTF/BAH/006/BAH". Bahrain is the first to announce an advanced health status in PPR and PMAT status, a success story selected among countries in the Near East by the regional secretariat to presented as a role model.



Bahrain - FAO Field Personnel taking blood samples from goats.

Brucellosis and PPR are among the major transboundary animal diseases that cause high economic losses (both direct and indirect). In collaboration with the Ministry of Municipality and Agriculture in Bahrain, FAO conducted large scale epidemiological surveillances on brucellosis and PPR. FAO built capacity of the Ministry staff engaged in animal health services in Bahrain such as in disease surveillance, outbreak investigation and early warning, laboratory techniques. In addition, hands-on training was provided along with the required lab equipment and diagnostic kits, and preparation of control and contingency plans for PPR and brucellosis for submission to the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).



Sultanate of Oman - Omani farmers setting up a field for agricultural purposes in Bilad Sayt, and Irrigated terraced farm crops on the slopes of Bilad Sayt.

## OMAN

**Umbrella programme to transform agrifood systems in Oman.** The programme will be operationalized through several projects and will contribute to Oman Vision 2040, which focuses on the optimal and balanced use of land and natural resources and the protection of the environment to bring about food, water, and energy security. With a duration of five years, the programme will target three focus areas, namely:

- o Enhance social capacities, economic competitiveness, and innovations for inclusive and efficient value chains in agriculture and fisheries;
- o increase environmental sustainability and resilience of the agriculture and fisheries sector;
- o strengthening enabling environment for agrifood systems transformation.



United Arab Emirates – The Minister of Climate Change and Environment, Assistant Undersecretary for the MoHAP's Health Regulation Sector, Director-General of Emirates Nature-WWF, and FAO SNG Subregional Coordinator and FAO Representative in the UAE during the official launch of the *Food for Life* campaign at the Food for Future summit.

## United Arab Emirates

**Master Plan for sustainable agriculture development in Abu Dhabi aims at developing a Master plan and a Decision-Support Toolbox (DST)** that will secure the emergence of stable, competitive, sustainable, diversified, and integrated agriculture production system, while achieving food security, economic growth, and sustainable use of natural resources. Abu Dhabi farmers face structural, managerial, and marketing challenges that exacerbate the constraints the harsh environment poses to agriculture production. A solid scientific evidence base will guide the definition of the Master Plan's initiatives, projects, and investments. The DST will help in identifying most suitable crops, inefficiency determinants, and best options to maximize farmers' returns, while securing socioeconomic and environmental sustainability.

**Strengthening research, technology and innovation to enable food security in the United Arab Emirates and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia** aims at developing agenda for joint research, technology development and innovation on aquaculture, gene discovery for extreme traits and on cultured meats and novel foods. The project is implemented in the framework of the Saudi Emirati Coordination Council with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAE) in the United Arab Emirates, and the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MoEWA) and Saudi Grains Organization (SAGO), in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**Agri-food systems transformation: healthy diets, nutrition, food safety, reducing food loss and waste.** Focusing on more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems, FAO is committed to ensure food security, improve diets and raise levels of nutrition. In the UAE, FAO supported the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment in a multi-partner awareness generation campaign on "Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems" (known as *Food for Life* Campaign) which brought health, nutrition, and planetary well-being together. FAO provided technical assistance and knowledge sharing and produced a video (<https://twitter.com/FAOinUAE/status/1615605003615444995>) on healthy diets, good nutrition, and sustainable agri-food systems. By using an agri-food systems approach, FAO is also supporting the UAE government in food safety and food loss and waste reduction. Moreover, it contributes to the UAE efforts in implementing actions agreed at the Food Systems Summit in 2021.



Yemen, a beneficiary from the Supporting Resilient Livelihoods, Food Security and Climate Adaptation Programme (ERRY II) feeds for her sheep.

## YEMEN

### Supporting resilient livelihoods, food security and climate adaptation programme project.

The project is funded by the European Union and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and aims at building community resilience by enhancing community capacity and reduce vulnerability to the protracted and complex crisis in Yemen caused by the civil war, coupled with poverty and environmental shocks.

### Did you know? About FAO's logo



The first version of FAO emblem was in the form of a silver badge prepared by Danish silversmith, Georg Jensen, and distributed during the Second Session of FAO's Conference, held in Copenhagen in 1946. The first logo shows a head of wheat, with the letters of FAO in approximately the same position as on the emblem today. The first Director-General, Sir John Boyd Orr, selected the current logo as FAO motto. "Fiat Panis" means "Let there be bread". The emblem in its current version was registered in 1964.

### Did you know? Strategic Framework

A Strategic Framework prepared for a period of 10 to 15 years, and reviewed every four years guides FAO's work since 2010. The strategic framework 2022-2031 was developed in the context of major global and regional challenges in the areas of FAO's mandate, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Strategic Framework is guided by FAO's vision and the three global goals of Members. It was developed through an inclusive, transparent process involving extensive internal and external consultations, and Governing Body meetings and informal consultations. It was endorsed at the 42nd session of FAO's Conference in June 2021

### Did you know? Where we work

FAO is headquartered in Rome, Italy, with offices in five regions:

- Regional Office for Africa (RAF, based in Accra, Ghana)
- Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP, based in Bangkok, Thailand)
- Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU, based in Budapest, Hungary)
- Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLC, based in Santiago, Chile)
- Regional Office for Near East and North Africa (RNE, based in Cairo, Egypt).

### Information Events



More About:

A unique opportunity to raise awareness on small producers.

#IYFA2022

#ArtisanalFisheriesAquaculture

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
ARTISANAL FISHERIES  
AND AQUACULTURE



From 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, after one-year postponement due to COVID-19, the United Arab Emirates hosted a World Expo in Dubai that attracted 24 million visitors from all over the world. With the motto "Connecting Minds, Creating the Future", it was a perfect occasion for FAO to raise awareness on the Blue Transformation, the challenges but also the opportunities that fisheries and aquaculture offer for the future of our food systems.

On 22 January 2022, an event named "Life below water: progress toward SDG 14 and way forward" was jointly organized by FAO and the Emirati Ministry of Climate Change and Environment. Gathering experts from FAO headquarters, United Arab Emirates Federal and Emirati Authorities, Norway, which Expo 2020 pavilion has been highlighting fisheries and aquaculture, and the Hammour House project, the event took stock of the progress made so far toward achieving the various targets of SDG 14, and discussed options to go forward.

Exactly one month later, on 22 February 2022, a high-level event focused on “Blue Transformation and climate change in the GCC states and Yemen”, in the presence of the Minister of Agriculture and Fish Wealth of Yemen, the Assistant Director-General of FAO for the Near East and North Africa, the Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Division of FAO as well as numerous undersecretaries and high authorities from all over the region. It was an opportunity to introduce the Blue Transformation and start building a momentum towards the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNCCC) COP 27 in Egypt and COP 28 in the United Arab Emirates. Finally, few hours before the final closure of Expo 2020, FAO supported the Fujairah Environment Agency in the organization of the fourth Fujairah International Conference for Coastal Areas and Marine Environment 2022.

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