



# The Sultanate of Oman and FAO

## *Technical and capacity development for agriculture and fisheries growth*

Oman enjoys a dynamic partnership with FAO, which was strengthened in 2012 with the opening of the FAO country representation. Cooperation has focused on sustainable development of the food, agriculture and fisheries sectors, while ensuring the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. FAO's support also focuses on the achievement of value added in the priority areas identified by Oman.

### Disposal of obsolete pesticides

The mixture of obsolete liquid and solid pesticides and pollutants stored in a number of sites across the country constitutes a potential threat to people and the environment. In cooperation with a private sector company, FAO helped to train government officials to load these obsolete pesticides safely onto containers for transporting hazardous substances.

The programme implementation steps included enforcing notification and statements, actions to package, reseal, export and transport, and actions related to eliminating obsolete pesticides. In view of the potential risks associated with hazardous wastes, the overall priority of the project was to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all workers in the field and the surrounding community.

A second phase of the project is currently ongoing, whereby FAO is assisting in disposing of an additional amount of obsolete pesticides. Another key component will be an integrated capacity development module for sustainable management of pesticides.

*Project: Disposal of obsolete pesticides. Funded by Oman.*

### Matching FAO's expertise to Oman's development priorities

FAO's assistance in Oman is shaped by the 2018-2022 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which is centred on four priority areas:

- **Economic competitiveness of the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors**, by enhancing technical and organizational innovations. Support includes the enhancement of capacities for the development of efficient value chains, reduction of post-harvest losses, and strengthening of food safety and biosecurity.
- **Environmental sustainability and resilience of the agriculture and fisheries sectors to climate change**, including enhanced sustainable management of natural resources in agriculture and fisheries and aquaculture, and the introduction of means and practices for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- **Empowerment of rural communities and livelihood opportunities**, with an emphasis on supporting the professionalization of farmers by developing pilot programmes based on social innovations and aimed at strengthening the capacities of family farmers and other value chain actors, while making value chains more inclusive for women.
- **Providing an enabling institutional environment for agriculture, fisheries and rural development** to ensure the successful implementation of policies and the stimulation of investments that lead to agriculture, fisheries and rural development.

The CPF was jointly developed with the Government and other partners, including stakeholders from the farming community and Oman's private sector – with the latter involved in a CPF workshop for the first time. The CPF reflects relevant priorities in key national development, policies and national strategies, such as the Oman Vision 2040, Tanfeeth, the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy towards 2040 (SARDS 40), as well as FAO's Strategic Framework, Regional Initiatives, and the 2030 Agenda.

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## Fisheries

**Supporting the Omani fishing fleet.** To support the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries' efforts to improve the design, construction, equipment and operation of fishing vessels, FAO is providing assistance to lay down guidelines for safety at sea for fishermen and fishing vessels. The objective is to make vessels and practices safe and attractive to people who want to work in Oman's fisheries, and improvements should raise the level of safety and accommodation on board fishing vessels.

*Project: Improvement of Vessel Monitoring Systems in Oman. Funded by Oman.*

**Enhanced fisheries survey information system.** Aiming to support the sound assessment of Oman's fisheries, an FAO project has developed an information system for the use by the National Fisheries Management Authority and the scientific community in Oman, particularly the Marine Science and Fisheries Centre (MSFC).

As part of the project's results, a relational database was successfully delivered to the MSFC and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The database is made up of two modules, one for independent fishery data and another for fishery-dependent data not foreseen in the original project document, but specifically requested by MSFC staff during project implementation. Training sessions have been instrumental in tailoring the database to the MSFC's priorities, while equipping MSFC staff with the necessary technical skills to use all of the database's functionalities. An additional fourth training session has been carried out to consolidate the learning process, without requiring further funding.

*Project Oman Trawl Survey Information System (OTRIS). Funded by Oman.*

**Strengthening fisheries and aquaculture.** An FAO project was to provide recommendations for improving the management, policy and legal and regulatory frameworks governing the country's fishmeal and oil production sector. To date, a proposed draft regulatory framework for the "Regulation for the Fishmeal and Fish Oil Production" has been developed and is awaiting approval by the relevant authorities.

Once approved, this legal framework will contribute to strengthening Oman's fishmeal and fish oil subsectors, also ensuring they are environmentally sustainable. This is expected to have an impact on manufacturers in the sector, as they will be required to adhere to high standards for the production of high-quality fish-based products destined for consumption in Oman and for export.

*Project: Improvements to Oman's Fish Meal and Oil Sector Legal and Regulatory Framework. Funded by Oman.*

## Sustainable development strategy

Oman's "Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy: towards 2040 (SARDS 2040)" provides strategic and programmatic guidance to policy-making and investment in the Omani agriculture and rural sector. The strategy consists of a comprehensive set of measures needed to ensure that future agricultural and rural development activities are economically viable and environmentally sustainable, thus contributing to the overall well-being of the Omani people.

Experts from an Omani national team and an FAO team worked jointly to develop the Strategy. Specifically, FAO provided support in analysing the existing situation and formulating a strategy that would contribute to the efficient and sustainable use of the scarce natural resources for improved livelihoods of the Omani people.

Project activities included: studies produced on Omani agriculture and rural development sectors; a high-level mission, conducted in 2015, to establish the scope, structure and timeframe of SARDS 2040; three technical missions (between September 2015 and March 2016) to validate and finalize contents of SARDS; and the presentation of SARDS to the Supreme Council for Planning for approval in October 2016.

The process unfolded in a participatory way, involving dialogue with all relevant stakeholders to ensure their full ownership of the Strategy and the development of realistic analyses and proposals.

*Project: Preparation of a Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy for Sultanate of Oman until 2030. Funded by Oman (US\$1 473 807).*

*"We are the first generation that can end hunger and make food and nutrition security truly universal. And perhaps we are also the last generation in a position to avoid irreversible damage brought about by climate change."*

**FAO Director-General**

