



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Globally Important
**AGRICULTURAL
HERITAGE**
Systems



Guidelines for Developing a GIAHS Proposal Document

November 2023

the \mathbb{R}^n -valued function \mathbf{f} is a solution of the system (1) if and only if \mathbf{f} is a solution of the system (2).

Let us assume that \mathbf{f} is a solution of the system (2). Then, for any $t \in \mathbb{R}$, we have

$$\mathbf{f}(t) = \mathbf{f}(0) + \int_0^t \mathbf{f}'(s) ds = \mathbf{f}(0) + \int_0^t \mathbf{A}(s) \mathbf{f}(s) ds.$$

Since \mathbf{f} is a solution of the system (2), we have $\mathbf{f}(0) = \mathbf{0}$. Therefore, we have

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GUIDANCE TO THE AUTHORS

1. Purpose

- ▶ The *Guidelines for Developing a GIAHS Proposal Document*, hereinafter referred to as “the Guidelines”, aim to provide clear recommendations to the authors of GIAHS proposal documents on the descriptions required in each part of the GIAHS application template. Therefore, the Guidelines are a supplementary document to the GIAHS proposal template.
- ▶ The Guidelines may be subject to changes. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to check the GIAHS [website](#) regularly.
- ▶ Consult with the glossary to align with the definitions provided.
- ▶ When developing a GIAHS proposal document, it is recommended to consider the following points to facilitate the correct preparation and submission of the proposal.

2. Contents of the proposal

- ▶ Descriptions provided in the document must be objective, based on verifiable facts and reliable data, and supported by scientific evidence or references, avoiding the use of implicit and metaphorical expressions.
- ▶ The document should be coherent and structured in a way that allows a comprehensive understanding of the main characteristics of the proposed system, taking into account that some readers may be unfamiliar with the key information.
- ▶ References and resources shall be included in the document through appropriate and accurate citations within the text and with a bibliography at the end of the proposal.

3. Revising content and proposal

- ▶ Following the requests for revision and amendments by the Scientific Advisory Group, applicants are required to submit the following documents:
 - (1) a revision with track-change modifications highlighted,
 - (2) a clean version of the revision (track changes accepted).
 - (3) a third standalone document that answers each of the SAG questions and gives the page numbers where the revisions have been included in the revised proposal.

4. Length of the proposal

- ▶ There is no limitation to the length of the proposal document. The description should be comprehensive and detailed enough to ensure a clear understanding of the proposed agricultural system. However, it is highly recommended that unnecessary duplication or information that is not relevant to the requirements indicated in the Guidelines be avoided.

5. Visual materials and additional information

- ▶ Photographs should be included to facilitate understanding of the contents described in the document (preferably inserted in the body of the document where appropriate). Also, if possible, the comparison between historical photos and current ones (better if taken in the same places) could be useful to illustrate how the agricultural landscape system has evolved over the years.
- ▶ If available, it is recommended to add a video/video clip of the proposed system for a better and thorough understanding of the function of the traditional system.

- ▶ Scientific reference materials related to the agricultural system are also highly recommended.
- ▶ The use of other visual materials (such as figures, diagrams, graphs, hand-made sketches, planimetric maps, land sections, colour images and other illustrations) is essential for understanding the proposed farming systems. For example, the inclusion of a diagram illustrating the interrelationships among different components in a system or the evolution of the landscape(s) over the production cycle is strongly encouraged.

6. Use of maps

All the maps in a proposal document should exhibit high visual quality (high resolution).

a. The application requires two main cartographic outputs:

- a. **Geographical Map** showing the exact location of the proposed system, its clear boundaries and geographic conditions.
- b. **Land Use map** showing all the land uses and land cover of the proposed site.

- ▶ The use of additional maps throughout the application is highly recommended (climatic, topographic, contour lines, etc.).

7. The GIAHS visual identity, logo and colours of each page, or other visual elements in these Guidelines should not be used in official proposal documents submitted to FAO. They have been used for the sole purpose of designing the Guidelines based on FAO's reserved rights.

8. Structure of the proposal document.

a. A proposal document should have the following structure: each section should have chapters (specifically, Section III includes Parts A, B, C, D and Section IV includes a chapter for each of the five GIAHS selection criteria) and sub-chapters as appropriate;

- i. Cover page:
- ii. Table of contents:
- iii. Section I. Summary Information Table:
- iv. Section II. Executive Summary:
- v. Section III. Significance of the Proposed System:
- vi. Section IV. GIAHS selection criteria: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- vii. Section V. Action plan for Dynamic Conservation:
- viii. Bibliography
- ix. Annex (there can be several annexes when necessary).

b. Font, font size and line spacing

1. Font: "Times New Roman", font size 11 or 12:
2. Line spacing: 1
3. The chapter, section and subsection titles should be present as follows:

I. TITLE OF THE CHAPTER (Font Size 16)

1. Title of the Section (Font size 14)

1.1. Title of the Subsection (Font size 12)

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I.



I. SUMMARY INFORMATION TABLE

Name/Title of the proposed GIAHS	The title should preferably include a reference to the location and the main features of the system.
Submission date	
Requesting Agency/ Organization and contact information	
Responsible Ministry and contact information	
Location and geographical coordinates	Region, City, Province, and brief description of the location.
Transport links between the site and the capital city or major cities	The fastest way to reach the site (plane, highway), distance to the nearest airport, etc.
Area of coverage (expressed as “ha”) of the proposed GIAHS	
Agroecological zones² for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and aquaculture	Agroecological zones are defined by FAO as homogenous and contiguous areas with similar soil, land and climate characteristics.

¹ Consult the explanations provided in Part A of the Significance of the proposed system chapter.

² An Agroecological zone is a land resource mapping unit, defined in terms of climate, landform, soils, and/or land cover, with a specific range of potentials and constraints for land use.

Topographic features	
Climate type	Climate types are defined under an international classification .
Approximate population	Number of individuals and households involved in the proposed GIAHS.
Traditional communities and/or Indigenous Peoples (if applicable)	A group of people who identify with each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural, or national experiences.
Main source of livelihoods	Agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, fisheries, food manufacturing, tourism, food processing, etc.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Note for the Applicants

Summarize concisely the following content (three pages maximum)



Overview of the proposed system

This section should provide concise narrative about all the components of the proposal. Briefly describe the type of system (e.g. agropastoralism, fisheries, agroforestry, shifting agriculture, traditional irrigation, etc.), how it is working, the global importance, the interactions in the system, the relevance to five selection criteria. Clear description of each of these elements should show the uniqueness of the system.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM

Note for the Applicants

- This chapter describes the details of the system and its **global importance with emphasis on its heritage values at the global level** by explaining the unique features that qualify the system as GIAHS.
- **The global values of the system can be described through the following four parts:**

PART A Specific values and features

- Provide a description of the interactions of the different components of the system covering either tangible or intangible flows happening within the GIAHS site. This description shall be supported by schematic and illustrative visuals.
- Provide a clear explanation of the specific values and unique features (then presented in detail across the five selection criteria) of the proposed system that distinguish the system as a GIAHS site by **highlighting the elements of global importance.**
- Provide a map including clear boundaries.

A GIAHS proposed site is:

The area where all five GIAHS selection criteria outlined in the proposal document are materialized or applied. It encompasses not only cultivated fields of crops but also the areas in the surrounding natural environment where farmers have worked and explored for many years to develop and/or utilize their beneficial functions, such as ecosystem services to promote and support agricultural production. These human-influenced elements in the natural environment form a part of the GIAHS, and their associated knowhow also falls under the GIAHS Traditional Knowledge.

In justified cases, the proposal could include in the GIAHS area some lands that are not precisely used for the main agricultural products that give significance to the GIAHS but could be considered within the boundaries:

a. Lands that are so integrated or interlinked with the traditional agricultural areas that cannot be excluded of the core area to understand the GIAHS, from a systems' point of view (e.g., temporary agricultural plots inside the forest, areas for transhumances, agroforestry, landscapes of rivers combined with the agricultural land, heritage milestones, rural housing, etc.)

b. Areas that consider cultural, agrobiodiversity, heritage, landscape or actions for dynamic conservation that need wider boundaries to understand the GIAHS site's values.

A surrounding supporting area can be added, where applicable, is defined as:

The surrounding supporting area is an area which serves to supporting the conservation, management, and sustainability of the GIAHS. It helps maintain the specific features of GIAHS by providing a transition between potential harmful practices and exploitations of the environment and a GIAHS conserved area through clear regulations and appropriate monitoring.

The inclusion of a surrounding supportive area is not mandatory and subject to adaptations for each system.

PART B Historical relevance

- Describe the historical development of the system, highlighting the main processes that have historically contributed to the evolution of the proposed system. Particular focus should be placed on the origin of the agricultural system and how it was established and has adapted over time, to illustrate the values that link the local system with the broader picture of agricultural development.

PART C Contemporary relevance

- Highlight how the system contributes to addressing contemporary global issues and challenges such as food security and nutrition, social and economic welfare, climate change adaptation, rural development and conservation, and the sustainable use of biodiversity, among others.
- Briefly describe how the agricultural system is relevant and contributes to FAO and UN Global Goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and achieving international engagements such as the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNFFF) and UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.

PART D Comparative analysis

- Explain the differences and peculiarities of the proposed system compared with other similar agricultural systems in the same country and/or in other countries (comparative study). The proposed system may have distinctive features compared with other similar systems, as a consequence of the interaction between human beings and nature as well as the coevolution of communities with the local environment and the lengthy knowledge transfer process. The aim of the comparative study is to conduct an objective exercise to clarify similarities and distinctive features of the proposed system, rather than to judge the superiority of one system over any another.
- At the international level, such comparisons enable the authors to interpret the specific characteristics of the proposed system within a particular national or even regional natural environment and cultural context, creating an opportunity to exchange information and learn from similar systems. In case of joint/collective applications, this exercise enables the various stakeholders to properly evaluate the proposed system.

IV. GIAHS SELECTION CRITERIA

Note for the Applicants

- ▶ **This Chapter should have 5 Sections: one for each of the five GIAHS selection criteria** (as presented in the following pages). These sections allow for a detailed evaluation of the characteristics of the proposed system to be recognized as GIAHS. Each Section encompasses one of the elementary dimensions of agricultural heritage.
- ▶ The five criteria are interrelated. As a result, there may be some information overlap. However, the applicant should ensure that appropriate information in terms of both quality and quantity is provided under the most relevant criterion.
- ▶ The information provided under each criterion may not be exhaustive. Applicants can further expand on the system by placing any additional relevant information which does not fall under one of the five criteria in the annexes.

1 Food and livelihood security

Describe how the proposed agricultural system³ contributes to the local community's food and livelihood security. This may include access to food, its contribution to varied diets, as well as the economic sustainability of the system. The economic contribution of the system to the livelihoods of farming communities can include any practice that fosters supply and exchange among local and/or external communities.

Note for the Applicants

- ▶ Adequate information should be provided to describe the type of agriculture, its relevant economic activities, and its contribution to food and nutrition security and the livelihoods of the local community. The information should be further supported with numerical data and figures to the extent possible. In those cases where agriculture is not the main source of livelihoods, information on the general economic structure of the rural community should be provided.
- ▶ When illustrating local communities' contribution to food and nutrition security, the applicants can follow [the relevant FAO framework](#) designed for this purpose (Basic Concepts of Food Security).

Contribution of the proposed agricultural systems to the food security and livelihood security of the rural communities

- Describe how the proposed agricultural system (agricultural production) contributes to rural communities' food security and livelihoods (e.g., through food production and associated activities).

Products and services provided by the system

- List the main edible and non-edible products which are derived and produced from the system and contribute to the food and nutrition security and livelihoods of the community, including plants, animals, forestry and aquatic products as well as other products related to the wellbeing of the community, e.g., medicines.
- Describe the production volumes of the main crops, their land productivity (e.g., yield per ha) and sales (expressed as economic values), where available.
- Illustrate the degree of self-sufficiency (food, economic) that the local community has achieved with the proposed system.
- Present, in detail, the degree of market inclusion (market access/participation) attained for the system's products at the local, national, and international levels (e.g., percentage of production sold and the destination of the production).
- Provide information of the role of other economic activities associated with the heritage system in contributing to its conservation and development (e.g., tourism, agritourism, food processing, handicrafts, clothes, etc.).

Farming structure and management

- Specify the number of farms, including family farmers, that support the agricultural system.
- Describe the type of agricultural system: e.g., agricultural production models such as mixed cropping, intercropping, (rice paddies and aquaculture, etc.), agroforestry, pastoral or aquaculture system, etc.
- Describe the size of the land, forestland, grassland, and other relevant agricultural resources operating under the entire system and average farm size.

³ The FAO definition of agriculture includes forestry, livestock and fisheries sectors as well.

- Describe the labour structure on an average farm, which is expressed as the number of workers and the sources of agricultural labour force (from the household, the community, or external workers, etc.).
- Outline the average income per farmer (or household if this is more relevant), highlighting the contribution of the proposed agricultural system, as well as other income sources, in accordance with the local standard of living and aspirations.

Contribution to sustainability and resilience

- Describe the system's adaptive capacity and ability to continuously ensure food and livelihood security (e.g., through diversifying production or economic opportunities)

Threats and challenges

2 Agrobiodiversity

Describe in detail the agrobiodiversity of the system, according to the [FAO definition](#). The system should be endowed with agrobiodiversity, genetic diversity and relevant practices/knowledge contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and livestock practices.

Note for the Applicants

FAO defines agrobiodiversity as follows: *“The variety and variability of animals, plants and micro-organisms that are used directly or indirectly for food and agriculture, including crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries. It comprises the diversity of genetic resources (varieties, breeds) and species used for food, fodder, fibre, fuel, and pharmaceuticals. It also includes the diversity of non-harvested species that support production (soil micro-organisms, predators, pollinators), and those in the wider environment that support agro-ecosystems (agricultural, pastoral, forest and aquatic) as well as the diversity of the agro-ecosystems.”*

Cultivated, reared, and harvested plants and animals

- Provide an exhaustive list of cultivated and harvested species, varieties, and breeds in the form of a table and also specify, if possible, their intended purposes (e.g., food, medicinal use, human and/or animal consumption). Add photos of these varieties.
- Provide both the common names (both traditional and national languages, with translations in English if possible) and scientific names, as well as their specific features, and the number of the endemic and local varieties.
- Describe the distribution of the crops and varieties (mixed crops, mixed varieties, monoculture), and their characteristics.

Ecological functions

- Highlight the beneficial relationship among species and the ecosystem services provided by the agricultural system including cultivated and associated biodiversity.
- List of preserved species (wild relatives, plants, animals, microorganisms) connected to the system (e.g., forest management) highlighting threatened species/varieties and how the system contributes to their conservation.
- Highlight the beneficial relationship between human activities related to GIAHS practices and biodiversity.

Contribution of agrobiodiversity to the sustainability and resilience of the system

- Explain how agrobiodiversity and its interrelations with the ecosystem support the system in mitigating detrimental impacts associated with environmental pressures, such as drought, flood, land erosion, water eutrophication, wildfires, significant loss in flora and fauna communities, etc.
- Describe, if any, a process where agrobiodiversity contributes to increasing resilience against negative impacts caused by social, economic, health and other factors.

Threats and challenges

3 Local and traditional knowledge systems

Describe the status of invaluable local and traditional knowledge, ingenious adaptive technologies, and management systems for natural resources, including biota, land and water, which have supported agricultural, forestry and/or fishery activities.

Note for the Applicants

The suggestions below are based on plant production agricultural systems. For any other specific production system, the authors may decide to provide different information and/or expand on it or structure it differently. The central focus should reflect the title of the proposal.

Agricultural practices/technologies and associated knowledge

- Describe all the agricultural practices, technologies and associated knowledge that ensure sound management of the agricultural production system. These may include cultivation and management practices/technologies related to different types of crops, animal breeding, pollination practices, training methods, etc.
- Describe the management practices relating to genetic material selection, conservation, and propagation, highlighting farmers' agrobiodiversity management practices.
- Provide schemes that illustrate the interrelations and synergies existing within and outside the farms. Highlight, when necessary, the agroecological practices used (e.g., beneficial relations among crops and other agricultural activities, including aquatic animals, with a focus on synergies and ecological service management).
- Describe pest and disease management.
- Describe harvest and post-harvest management practices and technologies, where relevant.
- Describe the tools, technologies, and types of labour support provided (animal, machinery, etc.).

Natural agricultural resources management (Land and Water, etc.)

- Describe management practices and technologies for natural agricultural resources held by individual farmers and/or by the community: this can include water and soil management as well as forest and biodiversity management (e.g., terraces, stonewalls, irrigation networks, forest and fire management, agricultural architecture and buildings, etc.).
- Highlight practices which contribute to mitigating negative environmental impacts and increasing synergies between the agricultural system and its surrounding environment (features of the integrated system, symbiosis with the natural environment).

Contribution of local and traditional knowledge to sustainability and resilience

- Illustrate how traditional knowledge and practices contribute to the sustainability and resilience of the system, including practices which contribute to mitigating negative environmental impacts (e.g., through the reduction of risks and/or the conservation of natural resources).

Threats and challenges

4 Cultures, value systems and social organizations

Describe how the cultural identity and sense of place are embedded in and belong to the proposed system. In addition, illustrate how social organizations, value systems and cultural practices associated with resource management and food production may ensure conservation of and promote equity in the use of and access to natural resources. Indicate how local social organizations can play a critical role in balancing environmental and socio-economic objectives, in enhancing resilience and in the reproduction of all elements and processes critical to the functioning of the agricultural system.

Note for the Applicants

Cultural identity and agriculture

- Specific cultural practices and identity elements related to the agricultural system: beliefs, rituals and symbols, myths and stories, music, dances, languages, historical elements, arts and handicrafts, traditional clothes, traditional cuisine using local agricultural products as ingredients (and their nutritional value where possible), etc.

Management of the system

- List the organizations/associations relevant to the maintenance of the system highlighting their role, evolution and involvement (Community-Based Organizations (CBO's), farmers cooperatives, women's associations, youth cooperatives and associations, etc.).
- Describe collective value systems, such as customs and communal rules, highlighting their role in the maintenance, evolution and transmission of the proposed system (agreements for decision-making processes, community labour sharing, access and use of natural resources, customary laws, seed exchanges, gender-based division of labour, etc.) .
- Describe the management of the transmission of agriculture-related knowledge, practices and culture through the generations (e.g. through community leaders, families, women, etc.).
- Name the external organizations supporting the system, such as NGOs, foundations, government agencies, etc.
- Describe: the degree of awareness among local communities of the GIAHS application process; the extent of their involvement in the process; and their contribution to the process and to the implementation of the Dynamic Conservation Action Plan.

Contribution of culture, value systems and social organizations to the sustainability and resilience of the system

- Describe any known cases where common value systems and/or traditional social organizations contribute to supporting and increasing the sustainability and resilience of the system.

Threats and challenges

5 Landscape and seascape features

Describe how the landscapes or seascapes have developed over time through the interaction between human activity and the environment and appear to have stabilized or to evolve very slowly. Their form, shape and interlinkages are characterized by long historical persistence and a strong connection with the local socio-economic systems that produced them. Their stability, or slow evolution, is the evidence of integration of food production, the environment and culture in a specific area or region.

Note for the Applicants

- ▶ Agricultural heritage systems are land use systems and landscapes/seascapes evolving from the co-adaptation of a rural community with its environment. Therefore, this section should include all the information available concerning land use structure and landscape and seascape features⁴.
- ▶ Support the description of the landscape/seascape system with appropriate visual materials such as figures, photos, sketches, planimetries, cross-sections, and other kinds of diagrams.

General description of the landscape:

- Describe the land use and landscape with appropriate visual materials such as figures, photos and diagrams.

Natural context and land uses

- Describe the biophysical, abiotic, climatic, geographic, and environmental conditions of the system. This includes the physical environment, such as the location of the area affected by the GIAHS site, its characteristic morphology, average slope, its altitude, as well as the other natural components of the system and their functions (forests, watersheds, lakes, etc.).

Agricultural landscapes/seascapes

- Provide a land use map⁵, highlighting all relevant land use related to agricultural activities, including components such as cultivated land, wood pastures, grasslands, wetlands, swamps, water bodies, forests, urban areas and scattered settlements, and agricultural practices and technologies applied therein, such as terraces, dry stonewalls, water courses, hedges, tree rows, etc⁶. Land use maps may include those for each agroecological zone within the site, where necessary, as laid out in the summary.
- Provide a description of the agricultural landscape system, highlighting the relationships among tangible landscape components (as listed in the previous bullet) and their interaction with their spatial characteristics, locations, and functions, among others.
- Describe the impact of the system by highlighting how agriculture and its associated resource management practices have historically shaped and modified the landscape.

⁴ The landscape/seascape is more than just beautiful scenery. It is the tangible result of the interaction between human beings and nature in the course of history. It can be described as the shape of spaces (open, built, or natural), their specific functions (also related to their shapes or locations), and relationships among components that form the agricultural landscape system as a whole.

⁶ It is also suggested, where possible, to add charts and diagrams for the land use description

- List the unique features of the seascape, including the coastal landscape and adjoining areas of open water, views from land to sea, from sea to land and along the coastline⁷.

Settlements and associated built structures

- Describe the applied knowledge relating to land management practices and construction. The latter includes rural settlements, as well as any type of construction that is relevant to agricultural activities, e.g., dry-stone walls, terrace construction, barns, constructed wetlands, water reservoirs, etc.

Sustainability and resilience

- Highlight the roles and functions of management practices for landscapes and seascapes that contribute to addressing natural constraints, e.g. erosion, flooding, droughts, etc.
- List any landscape and territorial planning policies, if relevant.

Threats and challenges

⁷ Briefly describe, when possible, how the construction of the landscape/seascape over time has resulted in the current unique aesthetic character of the scenery, views, and pictures.

V. ACTION PLAN FOR DYNAMIC CONSERVATION

Note for the Applicants

An Action Plan for the dynamic conservation of the proposed GIAHS system must be developed with the proposal. When designing the Action Plan, the items recommended for inclusion are:

- a. Identify, assess, and analyze threats and challenges described across the five selection criteria (including socio-economic pressures and environmental changes) to the continued existence, sustainability, and viability of the system.
- b. Identify and provide a detailed description of concrete actions (including relevant policies, strategies and planning instruments) which are already under implementation and/or will be implemented in the area by various relevant stakeholders to cope with the threats and challenges identified and analyzed under “a.” above to promote the dynamic conservation of the system.
- c. State also in detail how each action will respond to the threats and challenges described in subparagraph “a.”.
- d. While describing “b.” (above), the following supplementary information should also be provided:
 - Explain the role and responsibility of each stakeholder in the relevant action, including local communities and institutions involved at the local, national, and international levels, specifying which stakeholders are acting as the responsible body, and which ones are the partners.
 - Establish a concrete and feasible time frame for the implementation of each action.
 - Indicate a tentative budget estimate for the Action Plan’s implementation, as well as the funding sources.
 - Explain how multiple stakeholders are involved and how policies, strategies and actions can be used to leverage funding and/or mobilize resources at the local, national and/or international level(s).
 - Describe how monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and impact of the Action Plan will be undertaken.

Ensure that the Action Plan is properly organized, results-oriented and well-coordinated so that each action addresses the threats identified and sets targets through which to achieve its goal within a given time frame.

www.fao.org/qiahs