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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SUB-COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK

Second Session

16 - 18 July 2024

Consultations on a voluntary guidance tool for sustainably enhancing the productivity of small-scale livestock producers

Executive Summary

The COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock, at its First Session on 16–18 March 2022, recommended COAG to request FAO to “organize further consultations on the need, scope, nature, and process for the development of a dedicated voluntary guidance tool for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity.”¹ In response to this request, FAO conducted a wide-ranging, inclusive and multistakeholder consultation process, involving national governments and institutions, producer organizations, civil society organizations, development organizations and research and academic institutions.

This document provides an overview of the main findings of (i) a global survey (ii) an online consultation and (iii) regional consultations with producer organizations and civil society organizations conducted as part of the consultation process. From the consultations, it emerged that participants considered that a voluntary guidance tool for sustainably enhancing the productivity of small-scale livestock producers would fulfil an important need. The tool’s potential objectives, scope and nature, and development process were also identified.

¹ COAG/2022/5, para 21 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ni966en>

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

Suggested action by the Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee is invited to recommend COAG to:

- welcome the consultations organized by FAO on the need, scope, nature, and process for the development of a dedicated voluntary guidance tool for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity; and
- encourage FAO to develop the voluntary guidelines for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity through inclusive consultations with Members, producer organizations and other relevant stakeholders, and to submit them to a future session of the Sub-Committee.

Queries on the substantive content of the document may be addressed to:

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I. Introduction

1. The Committee on Agriculture (COAG), at its 27th Session on 28 September–2 October 2020, requested FAO “to develop a technical document of good practices, based on sound scientific evidence, including consideration of the relevant policy recommendations adopted by CFS 43 [the 43rd Session of the Committee on World Food Security] on this subject, as the basis to consider initiating negotiations by Members on voluntary guidelines to enhance the productivity of small-scale livestock keepers.”²

2. In response, FAO submitted to the COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock (the COAG Sub-Committee), at its First Session on 16–18 March 2022, a discussion document³ accompanied by a compilation of good practice exemplars and guidelines to sustainably enhance livestock productivity.⁴ The COAG Sub-Committee then recommended COAG to request FAO to “organize further consultations on the need, scope, nature, and process for the development of a dedicated voluntary guidance tool for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity.”⁵ The COAG at its 28th Session in July 2022 subsequently endorsed the report of the First Session of the COAG Sub-Committee and the recommendations therein.⁶

3. In response to this request, FAO conducted a wide-ranging, inclusive and multistakeholder consultation process, involving national governments and institutions, producer organizations, civil society organizations, development organizations and research and academic institutions.

² C 2021/21, para 14 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ne021en>

³ COAG:LI/2022/3, <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ni039en>

⁴ FAO. 2022. *Good practices to sustainably enhance the productivity of small-scale livestock producers - compilation of exemplars and guidelines*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cb8423en>

⁵ COAG/2022/5, para 21 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ni966en>

⁶ C 2023/22, para 10 <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/nj925en>

4. This document was prepared based on the findings of the consultation process. It also draws on existing literature and the above-mentioned discussion document submitted to the First Session of the COAG Sub-Committee.

II. Consultation process

5. The consultation process included (i) a global survey (ii) an online consultation and (iii) regional consultations with producer organizations and civil society organizations. The Bureau of the COAG Sub-Committee provided overall direction and guidance, while a multidisciplinary FAO Task Force – composed of FAO personnel from technical divisions and Decentralized Offices with experience in small-scale livestock development and/or multistakeholder processes and international instruments – provided technical guidance and support throughout the process. Coordination and day-to-day management were provided by FAO’s Animal Production and Health Division.

6. In January 2023, a letter⁷ was sent to all Members through the FAO Members Gateway inviting them to nominate a national coordinator to participate in the consultations. The terms of reference for national coordinators were attached to the letter. A total of 66 countries (13 in Africa, 10 in Asia and the Pacific, 20 in Europe and Central Asia, 16 in Latin America and the Caribbean and 7 in the Near East and North Africa) nominated a national coordinator.

7. The World Rural Forum (WRF)⁸ and International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC)⁹ supported FAO in the consultation process to facilitate the involvement of regional and national producer organizations and civil society organizations. The two organizations raised awareness among their members about the consultations and facilitated and supported their participation.

8. All communications related to the consultations were shared with the national coordinators, WRF, IPC and other relevant partners – including private sector organizations and research and academic bodies, as well as through relevant social media channels and networks, including the Domestic Animal Diversity Network (DAD-Net),¹⁰ Family Farming & Agroecology Community of Practice,¹¹ Family Farming Knowledge Platform Network,¹² FAO Sustainable Livestock Technical Network,¹³ Pastoralist Knowledge Hub¹⁴ and the Steering Committee of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming.

9. A comprehensive report has been prepared, detailing the activities and findings of each step of the consultation process. It also contains the names of the 66 countries that nominated national coordinators for this task and of the producer organizations and civil society organizations that participated in the regional consultations.¹⁵

A. Global survey

10. To start the consultation process, a global survey on the “Need for a dedicated voluntary guidance tool for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity” was developed, tested and then opened on SurveyMonkey from 17 April to 10 May 2023 in English, French and Spanish. The

⁷ C/NSA(NC), dated 5 January 2023

⁸ <https://www.ruralforum.org/en/>

⁹ <https://www.foodsovereignty.org/>

¹⁰ <https://www.fao.org/animal-genetics/fora/dad-net/en/>

¹¹ <https://dgroups.org/fao/familyfarming>

¹² <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/network/en/>

¹³ <https://dgroups.org/fao/livestocktechnical>

¹⁴ <https://www.fao.org/pastoralist-knowledge-hub/forum/en/>

¹⁵ The comprehensive report can be downloaded at: <https://www.fao.org/coag/sub-committee-on-livestock/second-session/discussion-documents/en/>

survey focused on assessing the need for the voluntary guidance tool and included the following sections: (i) respondent/contact information; (ii) characterization of small-scale livestock producers; (iii) importance of small-scale livestock production; (iv) small-scale livestock productivity; (v) national policies, regulatory frameworks and/or actions related to improved small-scale livestock productivity; (vi) global/regional policies and actions related to improved small-scale livestock productivity; (vii) voluntary guidance tools (related to existing relevant tools and how they affect improvements in small-scale livestock productivity); and (viii) potential voluntary guidance tool on small-scale livestock productivity.

11. Responses were received from 133 stakeholders of 71 countries. Thirty-two stakeholders were operating in Africa, 27 in Asia and the Pacific, 17 in Europe and Central Asia, 23 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 9 in the Near East and North Africa, and 25 at the global level. Respondents included representatives from 39 national governments or institutions; 25 national, regional and global civil society organizations (i.e. social movements, member-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and formal and informal associations); 22 national, regional and global producer organizations (of, or involving, small-scale producers and other small-scale value chain actors); 28 national, regional and global research and/or academic institutions; 14 regional and global development organizations (including United Nations entities and international financing institutions); and five other regional and global organizations.¹⁶

B. Online consultation

12. A report based on existing literature and the outcomes of the global survey¹⁷ and the detailed results of the global survey¹⁸ informed the online consultation on “Voluntary guidance tool for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity – Need, scope, nature, and development process”.¹⁹ The e-consultation was organized on the FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (the FSN Forum),²⁰ a neutral platform for multistakeholder dialogue. It ran from 17 November 2023 to 8 January 2024 and 55 written contributions were submitted.

C. Regional consultations with producer organizations and civil society organizations

13. In parallel to the online consultation, WRF and IPC conducted regional consultations within their respective memberships. WRF conducted regional consultations in four regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean), while IPC did so in five regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Middle East and North Africa). These organizations consolidated the common global and regional views and positions of their members and posted them on the FSN forum.

¹⁶ Details regarding the respondents are available at:

<https://assets.fsnforum.fao.org/public/resources/2023-11/Supplementary material - Small-scale livestock consultations .pdf>

¹⁷ FAO. 2023. *Report based on the outcomes of the global survey “Need for a dedicated voluntary guidance tool for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity”*. Rome.

https://assets.fsnforum.fao.org/public/resources/2023-11/EN_Background document - Small-scale livestock consultations_0.pdf

¹⁸ FAO. 2023. *Report based on the outcomes of the global survey “Need for a dedicated voluntary guidance tool for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity” - Supplementary material: Respondents and detailed results of the global survey*. Rome.

<https://assets.fsnforum.fao.org/public/resources/2023-11/Supplementary material - Small-scale livestock consultations .pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.fao.org/fsnforum/consultation/voluntary-guidance-tool-sustainable-enhancement-small-scale-livestock-productivity>

²⁰ <https://www.fao.org/fsnforum>

III. Outcomes of the consultation process

14. This section outlines the key findings of the consultation process. The need for the voluntary guidance tool was assessed primarily through the global survey. The objectives, scope and nature for the tool as well as the process for its development were drafted by FAO based on the results of the global survey and existing literature, and in line with relevant voluntary guidance tools recently developed by FAO. They were then revised and finalized according to the feedback from the online consultation and regional consultations with producer organizations and civil society organizations.

A. Need

15. The results from the global survey highlighted that small-scale livestock production systems across the globe make critical contributions to food and agricultural production, healthy diets, human health and well-being. Sixty-six percent of respondents of the global survey indicated that small-scale production systems contribute most of the livestock marketed in local markets in their countries or regions (n=103 people).²¹ Over 60 percent indicated that small-scale livestock production was of high to very high importance to small-scale producers' household food security and nutrition as well as to national food security and nutrition. It was also considered of high to very high importance to the national agricultural GDP or agricultural economy by 43 percent of respondents (n=107).

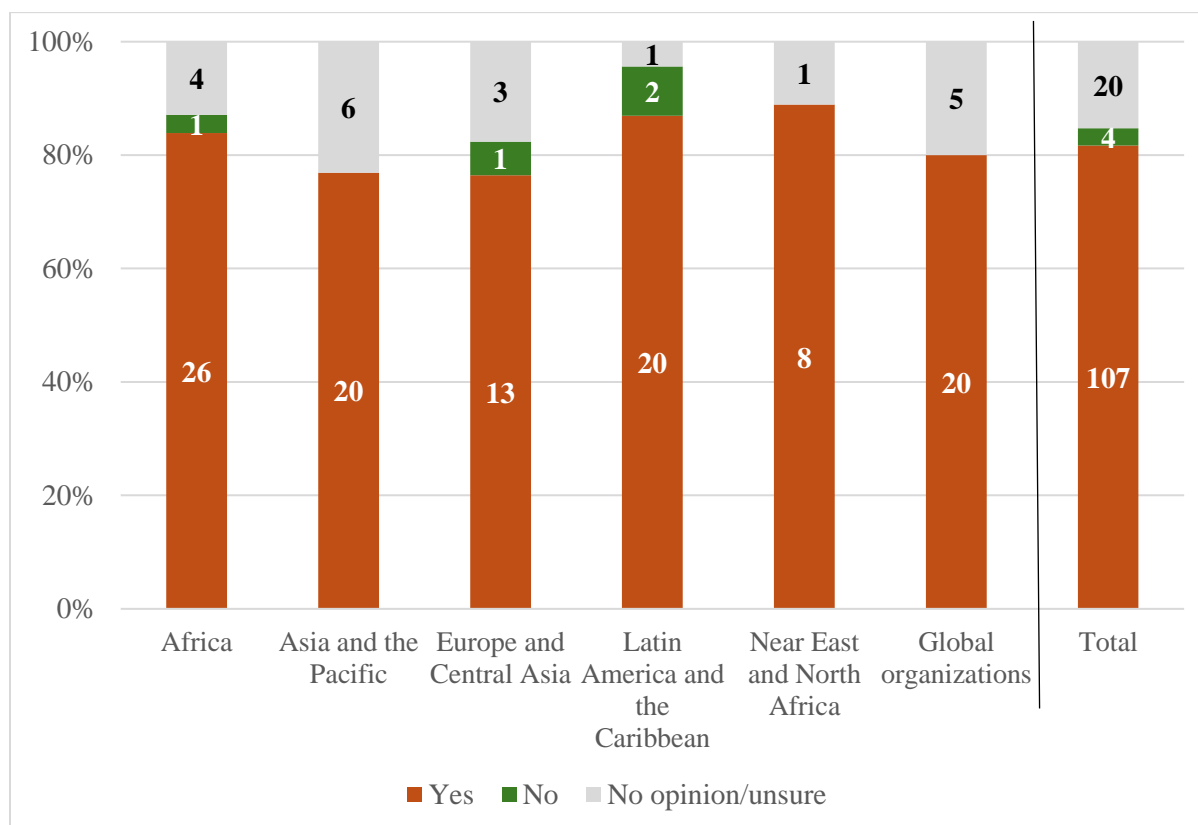
16. Thirty-eight percent of survey respondents characterized small-scale livestock productivity as low to very low in their countries or regions and 39 percent indicated that it was medium (n=107). Overall, policies, regulatory frameworks, programmes and/or actions related to improved small-scale livestock productivity were considered to be poor to very poor by 48 percent of the respondents in the countries or regions where they operate (n=107). In response to the question "are national governments supporting improved small-scale livestock productivity?", 69 percent of respondents indicated somewhat or very little and only 8 percent indicated complete support (n=107). Some respondents commented that where policies and regulatory frameworks do exist, implementation is generally limited or non-existent.

17. Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents were not aware of any type of voluntary guidance tools that have been developed for national, regional and/or global use and that apply/are relevant to the livestock sector (n=131). Of the 41 respondents who were aware of relevant tools, all thought they were relevant to small-scale livestock producers. However, none mentioned a tool that focuses on the specific vulnerabilities and challenges of small-scale livestock producers or provides consensus principles and guidance relating to the productivity and sustainability of small-scale livestock production systems.

18. To the question "In the opinion of your organization/institution, would a global voluntary guidance tool for small-scale livestock productivity be useful?", 82 percent of people answered 'Yes', 15 percent 'Unsure' and 3 percent 'No' (n=131). Results were quite consistent across regions (Figure 1). Wide support was also evident among participants in the online consultation, who emphasized the global importance of small-scale livestock production systems and the need to support the development and implementation of relevant policies and actions targeting small-scale livestock producers through a voluntary guidance tool.

²¹ The symbol "n" indicates the number of people who responded to the specific question.

Figure 1. Global survey responses regarding the usefulness of a global voluntary guidance tool for small-scale livestock productivity



Source: FAO. 2023. *Report based on the outcomes of the global survey “Need for a dedicated voluntary guidance tool for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity” - Supplementary material: Respondents and detailed results of the global survey*. Rome.

<https://assets.fsnforum.fao.org/public/resources/2023-11/Supplementary material - Small-scale livestock consultations .pdf>

B. Objectives

19. Through the consultations, the following objectives emerged for the potential voluntary guidance tool:

- a. Contribute to the sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) of small-scale livestock production systems, thereby supporting global, regional and national efforts towards poverty reduction, the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- b. Raise awareness and understanding of the multiple contributions of the wide range of small-scale livestock production systems in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); in particular, those related to the eradication of extreme poverty (SDG 1), the fight against hunger (SDG 2), the empowerment of women (SDG 5) and the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15). Participants in the consultations highlighted that small-scale livestock producers’ contributions are generally not recognized.
- c. Provide governments, and the other stakeholders relevant to small-scale livestock production, with guidance and principles that they can voluntarily use as a basis for updating or strengthening their policies, regulatory frameworks, programmes and actions for the sustainable enhancement of small-scale livestock productivity. It was acknowledged that the guidance and principles

should be internationally and regionally recognized, locally and nationally adaptable and system-specific.

- d. Foster integrated, system-specific, holistic and multistakeholder approaches and the active participation of small-scale livestock producers (both women and men) in decision-making processes, as they tend to be excluded compared to other actors in the livestock sector.
- e. Support actions to overcome challenges and improve the access of small-scale producers – particularly vulnerable people, women and youth – to: (i) productive resources, markets and credit; (ii) services, including animal health, animal production and financial services; (iii) natural resources, including land and water; (iv) information, including education and capacity development; and (v) appropriate technologies and innovations. Participants in the consultations indicated that these challenges were important obstacles to increased small-scale livestock productivity.

C. Scope and nature

20. Given the high level of interest in a voluntary guidance tool from across regions and stakeholders, the potential voluntary guidance tool would be global in scope. It would focus on low- and middle-income countries, where small-scale livestock production is most prevalent and productivity is reported to be low. However, from the consultations it also emerged that it should consider the needs, experiences and important roles played by small-scale livestock systems in high-income countries.

21. It was proposed that the tool would be developed as voluntary guidelines and would adopt a similar format, structure and development process as other voluntary guidelines developed by FAO, such as the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication²² and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.²³

22. The potential voluntary guidance tool would be addressed to governments and other stakeholders relevant to small-scale livestock production, including producers and their organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and research and academic institutions.

23. The participants in the consultations highlighted the wide diversity of small-scale livestock production systems and definitions of ‘small-scale livestock producers’. Recognizing this diversity, the potential voluntary guidance tool would not aim to prescribe a definition of small-scale livestock producers, but a working definition would be employed for the tool’s development. The tool would be particularly relevant to producers who, at the national level, have limited resources relative to other livestock keepers in the sector. It would focus on production systems that primarily rely on the family labour of both women and men and are integral to household livelihoods, and consider both pastoralists and small-scale farmers in systems with low to high dependence on external inputs.

D. Development process

24. The potential voluntary guidance tool would be developed through an inclusive and participatory process that would involve representatives of governments, small-scale livestock producers and their organizations, researchers, civil society, development partners and other relevant private and public sector actors. In this regard, participants in the consultations highlighted the importance of duly considering regional and national views, perspectives and priorities, particularly those of governments and small-scale

²² FAO. 2015. *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i4356en>

²³ FAO. 2022. *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*. First revision. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/i2801e>

livestock producers, including women and youth. It was also stressed that the consultations should be carried out in line with relevant FAO guidelines and strategies, such as the *Guidelines for Ensuring Balanced Representation of Civil Society in FAO Meetings and Processes*.²⁴

25. For the potential voluntary guidance tool, FAO could organize, subject to resource availability, in-person or virtual global and/or regional multistakeholder workshops and consultations. The importance of ensuring gender and geographical balance was highlighted. The draft of the voluntary guidance tool would be submitted to the future session of COAG Sub-Committee.

²⁴ FAO. 2013. *Guidelines for Ensuring Balanced Representation of Civil Society in FAO Meetings and Processes*. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/au892e>