



Transition towards sustainable food *and* agriculture

AN ANALYSIS OF FAO'S 2018-2019 WORK PLAN

Agroecology can support the achievement of multiple objectives – economic, environmental, social, nutritional, health and cultural – holistically. It is an approach that contributes directly to the achievement of thirteen of the Sustainable Development Goals, while significantly increasing the resilience of both people and the environment, mitigating climate change, and sustainably using and conserving natural resources and biodiversity. A systemic approach, involving relevant agricultural and food sectors and stakeholders in the broad adoption of agroecology, has the potential to greatly accelerate the transition to sustainable and resilient food systems, in line with the various international commitments made by member nations.

Based on an analysis of FAO's work plan for 2018-2019, this document presents an overview of FAO's engagement in agroecology and summarizes the main gaps and opportunities for upscaling. The criteria of analysis are based on four levels of changes to convert today's agricultural production and food systems to agroecological food systems (levels of transition; Fig. 1).¹

¹ A case by case analysis of FAO's results agreed in the 2018-2019 Work Plan has been conducted classifying the results regarding their contribution to one or more of the four levels of transition.

- Agroecology accounts for eight percent of FAO's results planned for 2018-2019 that support transitions to sustainable food and agriculture.
- Two-thirds (64 percent) of these results will be delivered in 78 countries across all five geographic regions addressing food security, nutrition and health, access to markets for local production, family- and small-scale production, climate-resilient approaches, sustainable natural resource management and sustainable food systems and livelihoods.
- Opportunities exist for further incorporating and upscaling agroecology in FAO's work through better integration of the agricultural sectors (crop and livestock production, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries) and transition towards sustainable food systems approaches in collaboration with partners particularly at country and regional levels.

FIGURE 1. TRANSITION TOWARDS AGROECOLOGY-BASED SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS



The four levels of transition towards agroecology based sustainable agriculture and food systems are closely related to FAO's five principles of Sustainable Food and Agriculture:

1. improving efficiency in the use of resources (level 1);
2. conserving, protecting and enhancing natural ecosystems (level 1 & 2);
3. protecting and improving rural livelihoods, equity and social well-being (level 3);
4. enhancing the resilience of people, communities and ecosystems (level 2);
5. promoting good governance of both natural and human systems (level 4).

The four levels describe a progressive path towards greater environmental, social and economic sustainability and can be implemented in any combination.

FAO'S CONTRIBUTION TO TRANSITION TOWARDS AGROECOLOGY-BASED SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

The analysis of FAO's work plan for 2018-19 shows that eight percent (250 results) of the results contribute to one or more of the levels of transition (Fig. 2). Those results address sustainability, ecological approaches, food security, nutrition and health, access to markets for local production, family and small-scale farming, climate-resilient approaches and sustainable food systems.

Of the eight percent of FAO's results, almost 80 percent of the activities contribute to building enabling environments for more sustainable food systems (level 4). For example, in a number of countries in the Near East, FAO is supporting the development of sustainable land management plans that support small-scale producers to improve their productivity with agroecological methods. As agroecology supports

the transformation of different components of the food system, most of FAO's results contribute to more than one transition level (76 percent of contributions). Level 4 interventions are often complemented with level 1 interventions supporting family farmers and other small scale agricultural producers in the replacement of current practices with sustainable practices to build resilience, adaptation and mitigation to climate change (e.g. soil fertility, water harvesting and integrated pest management).

Two-thirds (64 percent) of FAO's results are taking place at country level, 22 percent at regional level (Fig. 3) and 23 percent at global level.

All results in Latin America & the Caribbean relate to level 4, promoting enabling environments for more sustainable food systems through appropriate legal frameworks which address social, economic and environmental dimensions, sometimes integrating different agricultural sectors. For example, FAO is fostering

FIGURE 2. FAO'S INTERVENTIONS PLANNED FOR 2018-2019 SUPPORTING TRANSITION TOWARDS AGROECOLOGY-BASED SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS BY LEVELS

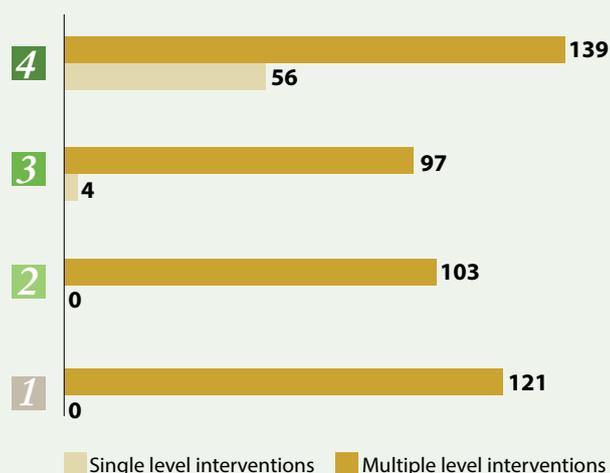
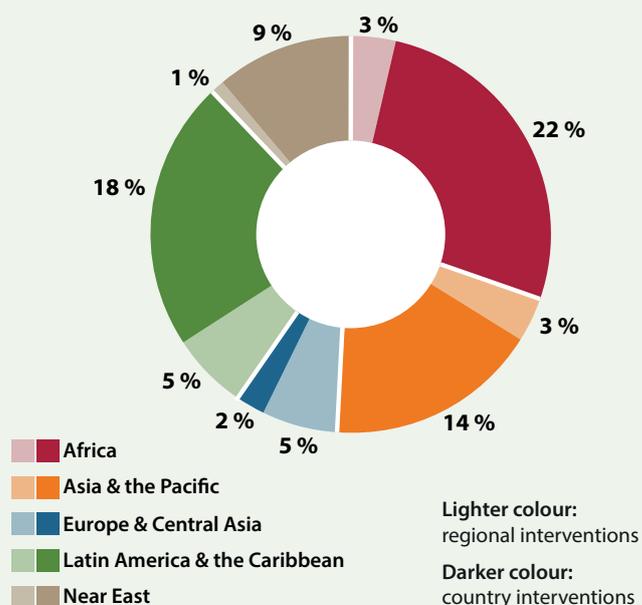


FIGURE 3. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF FAO'S INTERVENTIONS IN AGROECOLOGY



policy dialogues to strengthen the regional implementation of innovative and sustainable agroecological practices in crop and livestock production, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries, to increase food and nutrition security and eliminate rural poverty, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An emphasis on family farming is also found in the Near East and Europe & Central Asia where activities contribute mainly to level 4 (78 and 88 percent respectively). A regional strategy to promote the sustainable use of natural resources and the transition to a more effective use of ecosystem services is being developed in Europe & Central Asia to improve the resilience of livelihoods to climate change and reverse natural resource degradation.

In line with environmental priorities, in Asia and the Pacific most activities contributing to agroecology fall into level 1 (67 percent) and level 4 (72 percent).

In Africa, results are distributed across the four levels and address all dimensions of sustainability with a focus on level 4.

NICARAGUA: FAO is supporting the establishment of community seed banks and participatory plant breeding to guarantee seed security for family farming. The capacities of government and extension agencies for research, participatory innovation and technology transfer are being strengthened. Specialized training and the promotion of low-cost innovative practices are encouraged for the production and conservation of native seeds in the Dry Corridor to revitalize family farming and contribute to the consolidation and territorial implementation of the Productive Strategy of the National Human Development Plan.

TONGA: FAO is piloting integrated crop and livestock management practices to sustainably increase productivity and production, while addressing climate change and environmental degradation through inclusive and participatory approaches.

ANGOLA: 20 Farmer Field Schools will provide training on agroecological diversification practices for sustainable crop production (including soil fertility, integrated nutrient management and integrated pest management), engaging farmers' organizations, Ministries of Agriculture and Environment, local agricultural officers, extension officers and universities.

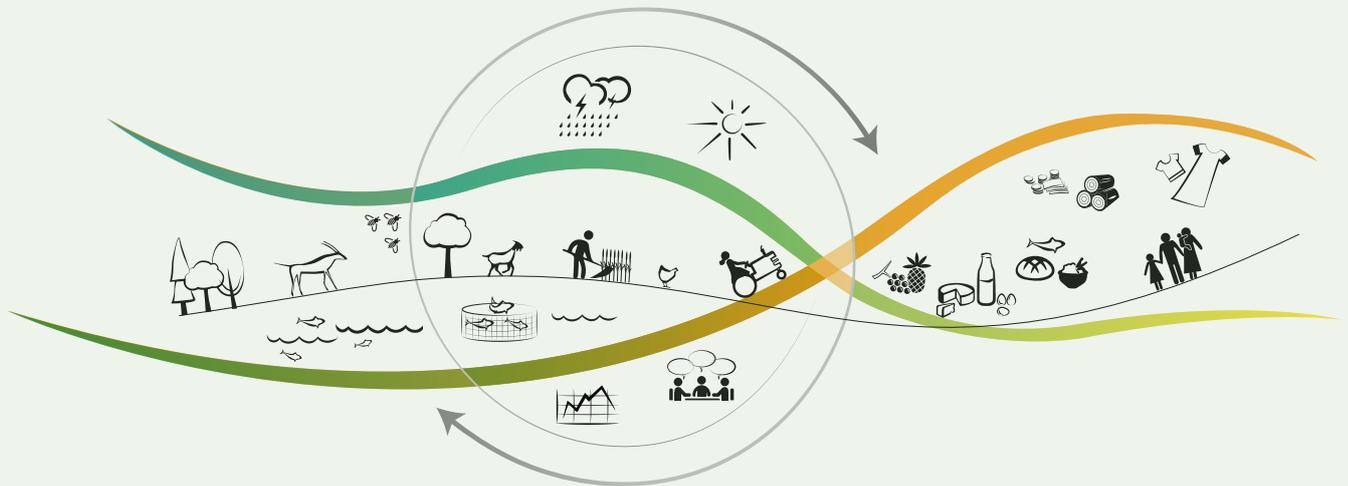
ETHIOPIA: FAO is supporting the government to strengthen its legal framework for sustainable local farmer-friendly procurement and bidding legislation for school meals, addressing production and consumption stages, along with healthy food habits and nutrition.

GUINEA: FAO is supporting the creation and strengthening of agroecological territories to increase rural employment and resilience, by providing technical and institutional support on sustainable production, local transformation and marketing, with a focus on collective action, multistakeholder dialogue, youth employment and gender-responsive approaches.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- A significant part (47 percent; 1 431 results) of FAO's work to be implemented over 2018-2019 could be shaped to upscale agroecology and to accelerate transitions towards sustainable food and agriculture and support countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - Transition approaches could be strengthened in FAO's work, by better integrating the different agricultural sectors (crop and livestock production, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries) and levels of transformation particularly strengthening the linkages between production and consumption.
- Current efforts to create enabling environments through legal and policy frameworks and upscale sustainable agroecological practices at producer level need to be complemented with:
 - sustainable and resilient food-system approaches, for example by implementing landscape and territorial approaches favouring biodiversity and ecosystem services in line with Sustainable Development Goal 2;
 - access to markets for agroecological producers along with responsible and healthy consumption habits favouring sustainable food and nutrition security in line with Sustainable Development Goals 2, 13, 14 and 15.
- Coherence among different legal and policy frameworks and instruments should be enhanced at country and regional levels to ensure effective agroecological transitions that are supported by incentives, financing, investments, research, extension and education.
 - Integrated approaches require institutional innovations which prioritize working across different agriculture and food sectors, favouring transitions across all stages of the food system. This will enable FAO to support countries in designing legal and policy frameworks with inter-ministerial interventions, creating synergies with similar sustainability approaches and engaging a variety of sectors and partners to simultaneously achieve diverse sustainability objectives.

BUILDING A COMMON VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



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