



FAMILY FARMING AND RURAL TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

OVERALL GOAL

Reduce rural poverty and improve food security in the region through family farming and territorial development.

About the Regional Initiative

Notwithstanding the important progress in hunger and poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean in recent decades, almost half of the rural population continues to live in poverty and almost a third live in extreme poverty, while 37 million people continue to suffer from hunger in the region.

People living in rural areas are four times more likely to suffer from extreme poverty than those in urban areas, and indigenous populations and women are disproportionately affected. In Guatemala and Bolivia for example, more than 60 percent of the rural population is estimated to live in poverty and over 40 percent in extreme poverty.

Most of the rural population in the region depends on agriculture to make a living and generally work on small-scale family farms. In Central America, for instance, almost one third of the total working population is engaged in family farming. Family farming is the most important source of employment in Haiti, with nearly one million family farms.

Small scale farmers in Latin America and the Caribbean are critical for food security. Over 80% of all farms in the region belong to this sector, which includes 60 million people, providing up to 60% of food production in some countries.

They face serious constraints in improving their food producing capacities, income and livelihoods. Many of them live in disadvantaged areas with reduced access to basic infrastructure, financing and services. Cultivable land is often eroded and vulnerability to weather shocks and other hazards high.

The Regional Initiative aims to reduce rural poverty and enhance food security and nutrition through rural territorial development to:

- Enhance capacities of government institutions and producers organizations to design and implement family farming and rural territorial development policies;
- Improve access for small scale farmers to natural resources, productive resources and services, with emphasis on collective territorial rights of indigenous peoples;
- Strengthen agri-food value chains;
- Develop social protection systems and align them with agriculture and rural development policies;
- Empower women farmers socially and economically;
- Improve the resilience of rural communities through improved technologies.





MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The initiative will be developed at country, sub-regional and regional level, with a strong South-South Cooperation component. Eight focus countries have been identified: **Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Colombia.**

Working with the Latin America and Caribbean Community of States (CELAC), in support of the Plan of Action on Family Farming and Rural Territorial Development, FAO will:

- Facilitate inter-sectoral policy dialogue at national, sub regional and regional level
- Strengthen policy and institutional capacities to link family farming to social protection and decent employment strategies in rural areas
- Connect family farming to food supply chains and public purchases of food and feeding schools programs
- Improve value-chains and access of small scale farmers to productive resources, services and markets
- Strengthen small scale farmer producers organizations at local level
- Support policy and strategies to create new opportunities for women, youth and indigenous peoples in rural areas
- Increase family farmers resilience by improving access to technical assistance, credit, agriculture insurance and markets.



IN PRACTICE

Specific activities include:

- Family farmers Registry improved at national and local level in Bolivia and Guatemala
- Strengthened policy dialogue between civil society, producer organizations and Government institutions for the participatory design of public policies through the establishment of National Committees on Family Farming and the strengthening of the Central American Rural Dialogue based on MERCOSUR's REAF experience in South America.
- Public purchases from family farming for School feeding programs promoted in Central America, Paraguay and Bolivia
- Preliminary assessment of the efficacy of Social Protection Programs on the improvement of rural livelihoods in Central America
- Methodology for mainstreaming "Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security" developed based on case studies in the region
- Public purchases from family farming for School feeding programs promoted in Guatemala and Bolivia
- Farmer Field Schools methodology set up in Haiti
- Central American Rural Dialogue strengthened based on MERCOSUR's Specialized Meeting on Family Farming (REAF) experience
- Knowledge and capacities for integrating gender equality into rural development policies strengthened in Guatemala
- Capacity building systems for agriculture risk management
- Inter-institutional Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems Group for Risk and Disaster Management established at sub-regional level.

SCOPE FOR DOING MORE AND BETTER

Inequalities in global food markets, coupled with neglect to the agricultural sector, have alarmingly contributed to the decline of family farming as a means for income generation and growth. In addition, society as a whole has tended to undervalue the potential of family farming to produce quality goods and services, and the contribution it makes to economic, environmental and social sustainability.

The role of women in family farming remains undervalued. Enhancing women's capacities through extension and rural advisory services is critical for agricultural productivity and food security. The sustainability of family farming and rural life in general depends on the youth and their ability to make a living from the farm. Family farming is based on sustainable management of natural resources and farmers' capacities to adapt to new climate scenarios. However, family farmers often lack insurance and cannot access mechanisms to help them implement new technologies quickly and efficiently to respond to new climatic scenarios. Investment in this initiative will help secure and preserve the critical role of family farms in the region.

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MORE INFORMATION

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