



Montenegro and FAO

Partnering to achieve sustainable agricultural and rural development

The partnership between FAO and Montenegro has grown steadily since the country became a member of the Organization in 2007. Close cooperation has already resulted in a wide array of country and regional initiatives, ranging from specific support to organic agriculture, family farming and aquaculture to more general agricultural and rural development policies geared towards EU accession. Scientific cooperation for responsible fisheries is another area where FAO has provided assistance, and Montenegro has recently expressed interest in expanding scientific cooperation and knowledge transfer in general with FAO.

Positive track record

The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia has primary responsibility for providing assistance in Montenegro. Interventions that have been successfully implemented in recent years include:

- Support to the country's small-scale farmers involved in organic agriculture.
- Development of the aquaculture sector of Montenegro, with a post-harvest perspective – a regional-scale project also encompassing Albania, Croatia and Turkey.
- Assistance for improving Montenegro's compliance with international standards for animal aquatic health – a regional-scale project encompassing Western Balkan countries.
- Streamlining of agriculture and rural development policies of South East Europe (SEE) countries, including Montenegro, for accession to the European Union (EU).
- Scientific cooperation to support responsible fisheries in the Adriatic Sea.
- Development assistance to farmers in remote areas of Montenegro and Kosovo*

*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Matching FAO's expertise to Montenegro's priorities

FAO assistance in Montenegro is shaped by the 2015-2019 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which sets out three priority areas of cooperation:

- Improved competitiveness of agriculture, including the alignment of agricultural and rural development policies and standards with EU requirements
- Natural resources are managed in a sustainable manner, including the introduction of relevant risk management methodologies (DRM) and climate-smart technologies to mitigate changes in agriculture caused by climate change
- Sustainable rural development, improved rural incomes and reduced rural poverty, including the development of new skills and inclusive value chains

Jointly developed with the Government, a wide range of stakeholders and partners within the country, the CPF reflects national priorities for food security, agriculture and rural development programmes and contributes to key development policies, including the new **Strategy for Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of Montenegro (2014-2020)**. In addition, the CPF supports FAO's strategic objectives and regional priorities as well as the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the UN Programme of Cooperation.

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RECENT SUCCESSES

Woodfuel supply and demand mapping

In 2013, FAO implemented WISDOM-Montenegro, a project for Woodfuel Integrated Supply and Demand Overview Mapping in Montenegro. Funding was provided by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the project was carried out in close cooperation with Montenegro's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the national Statistical Office.

WISDOM-Montenegro is part of a series of initiatives being undertaken by FAO to promote strategic wood energy planning and policy formulation. As is true for many countries worldwide, the wood energy sector in Montenegro would benefit from greater recognition in the national planning context, especially in forest and energy policies. The complex and cross-sectoral nature of wood energy, which touches on energy and forestry as well as agriculture and rural development, often results in the fragmentation of institutional competencies, leaving the wood energy issue "nobody's child".

The FAO-developed WISDOM methodology considers the specific characteristics of national wood energy systems and integrates relevant socio-economic data on woodfuel production and consumption. It serves as an effective tool for increasing understanding of complex wood energy issues and making them more accessible for policymakers.

Results of the project included a set of maps showing ideal zones for investment in woodfuel production as well as information and recommendations for government as well as investors.

For Montenegro, the assistance provided an excellent opportunity to improve coordination and inter-sectoral communication among the sectors of energy, renewable energy sources, environmental protection, forestry and waste management.

"Improving agricultural and food systems is essential for a world with healthier people as well as healthier ecosystems."

José Graziano da Silva,
FAO Director-General

National strategy and action plan for agriculture and rural development

Since August 2013, FAO has been supporting Montenegro's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in developing the country's Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy and Action Plan for the period 2014-2020. Support is provided under FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme, with a total budget of US\$115 000.

As part of the initiative, FAO has been providing technical assistance and capacity development to the staff of the Ministry to guide preparation of the Strategy itself. In addition, FAO has been building the Ministry's overall capacity for meeting its policy programming requirements for the European Union programming cycle – also covering the period 2014-2020.

A draft Strategy and Action Plan has already been prepared, and public consultations with external stakeholders were held in November 2014.

The Strategy serves as an opening benchmark for EU accession negotiations. Furthermore, it underlines the importance of the approximation process, whereby agriculture-related legislation is aligned to EU standards, for Montenegro's agriculture sector.

FAO support for alignment with EU standards

The European Model of Agriculture (EMA) and the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are the main EU standards with which Montenegro needs to align its agriculture and rural development sectors. In this context, FAO aims to provide institutional strengthening, with a strong focus on market standards as well as the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy. The inclusion of small farmers in shorter food chains will be supported, for example through increased competitiveness and sustainable rural development, with an emphasis on high-quality local products that are anchored to the territory.

