



SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

OVERALL GOAL

Bring small farmers back to the heart of rural growth and development.

About the Regional Initiative

In the Near East and North Africa region (NENA), more than 80% of agricultural production is provided by the small scale agriculture. Small farmers, especially women and young, are a vital element to reducing poverty and improving global food security. Most of the fresh food comes from small scale agriculture, thus contributing to feeding the growing urban households. Sustainable small scale agriculture has the potential to boost local economies, and lift communities out of poverty.

Still, despite its huge potential and although it is the major source of income in many NENA rural areas, small scale agriculture remains neglected in major policies in the region related to agriculture or food security.

By establishing a dynamic initiative on Sustainable Small Scale Agriculture for Inclusive Development, FAO will work closely with thousands of small farmers and producers (including women) in the region. This Initiative will put farmers and smallholders back at the centre of fight against hunger and poverty through the intensification of their production in a sustainable manner, strengthening their managerial and negotiation skills to market their products and fostering the role of women in the agricultural sector.

The Regional Initiative addresses challenges to small scale agriculture in five focus countries: **Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.**

The Initiative follows a three-pronged approach:

- Understanding of various types of smallholders, constraints and opportunities they face (labour, access to resources, market) in order to support adequate policies, programmes and investments.
- Addressing specific challenges of small scale agriculture in order to sustainably improve productivity, and quality and promote value added products.
- Empowerment of small farmers, herders, fishermen by strengthening producers' organizations (with a focus on gender equity) and support the creation of employment opportunities.

Key partners:

- Union Maghrébine et Nord-Africaine des Agriculteurs (UMNAGRI) (Regional platform covering Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Sudan and Tunisia)
- International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Area (ICARDA)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (Support to Farmers' Organizations of Africa Programme – SFOAP)
- Arab Peasants and Agricultural Cooperatives Union (APACU)
- Centre International des Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes (CIHEAM)





MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Initiative will work with member countries and partners, to support producers' organizations, cooperatives, and public institutions with organizational and capacity development tools to improve their governance structure and sustainability, in addition to gender and social equity.

Our experts will also:

- Support Governments in the formulation and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes aiming at rural economic diversification
- Advise on efficient financial institutions and innovative services for rural and agricultural development
- Assist with the development of value chains and market linkages
- Promote methods and technologies suitable for degraded and fragile ecosystems.

IN PRACTICE

Across the Region:

- Promotion of the Farmers Field Schools (FFS) approach, particularly through a Regional Integrated Pest Management Programme in the Near East.
- Awareness raising on the role of livestock in poverty reduction in North African countries.
- Development of E-learning platform and technical training for livestock producers' organizations.

In Morocco and Tunisia:

- Capacity building of producers organizations following a producers-to-producers approach, to strengthen their technical, managerial and negotiation skills.
- Value chain analysis carried out with emphasis on gender aspects and strengthening of the role of youth and women in producers' organizations.
- Monitoring of oasis ecosystems will be implemented through the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

In Tunisia:

- In-depth reviews on youth employment in the agricultural sector and on actual employment of young agronomists graduates.
- A national seminar on the role of rural women in family farming, in conjunction with a fair, promoting their local products, in collaboration with POs (UTAP), Ministry of agriculture and Secretary of State for woman and family.
- Promotion of a community-based forestry management approach in Tunisia.

In Egypt:

- Adoption of mechanized raised-bed production packages in small-scale farming systems with a strong focus on gender equity.
- Small-scale, affordable grey water systems for irrigation.
- Support to decision makers to better manage scarce natural resources, improve farmers' livelihood, and country food security.

SCOPE FOR DOING MORE AND BETTER

Investing in improving smallholders' production has been recognized as a powerful pathway to reducing rural poverty. In NENA region, huge inequalities persist between rural and urban areas and between smallholders and large agriculture producers. The Regional Dialogue on Family Farming and the Regional Gender Expert Consultation, held in 2013, as well as an international seminar on family farming, held in 2014 and co-organized with the Mediterranean network PARM (Prospective Agricole et Rurale en Méditerranée), have brought to the fore the importance of Family Farming in the region and its specific constraints.

FAO can achieve higher levels of productivity and income generation for family farming and women and men smallholders through its expertise and by playing a critical role in intensifying smallholders' production in a sustainable manner. Investing in this initiative will contribute to the adoption of pro-smallholder policies and institutions that reduce rural poverty and contribute to inclusive economic growth and food security. It will improve the environment and conditions of family farming in the region and have direct impact on smallholders' organizations, productivity and overall working conditions. Furthermore, it will help empowering youth and women and facilitate their access to decent employment.

CONTACTS

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MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.fao.org/about/what-we-do/so3>