



France and FAO

Partnering for sustainable food and nutrition security worldwide

France has long been an active and generous resource partner, working closely with FAO in support of shared food security and agricultural development goals. French expertise and seconded personnel make a vital contribution to the achievement of the Organization's mandate, and the country plays a major role in catalysing global and regional cooperation. French funding supports a wide range of programmes, with a recent focus on family farming, agro-ecology, climate change and resilience, and food security governance.

Mutual commitment to addressing climate change issues

Both France and FAO are working to ensure a high place for climate change – together with related food and agricultural issues – on the global agenda. The FAO-France partnership's Strategic Dialogue this year included discussions on options for building the resilience of food systems as a key element in responding to climate change. FAO also committed to providing knowledge and technical advice on food and nutrition security and climate change adaptation in agriculture to support the French Government as host of this year's UN Climate Change Conference (COP21), to be held in November.



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CONTACTS

Director
South-South Cooperation
and Resource Mobilization Division
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome
Tel: +39 0657055242
E-mail: TCS-Director@fao.org

Strategic cooperation

Strategic direction for the partnership between France and FAO is provided by a Framework Agreement (2012 to 2016), which sets out priority areas for cooperation, including:

- Improving global governance of food security and agriculture
- Improving food safety and quality to ensure safe, stable and diversified diets
- Improving natural resource management and use
- Strengthening vulnerable communities' resilience to natural disasters and other shocks
- Disseminating and building on the results of research on agriculture, food security, nutrition, natural resource management and public sector policies
- Sharing and building on national expertise and capacities

The Agreement has been complemented by an annual strategic dialogue since 2014.

Multiple sources of support

- French support and contributions to FAO's programmes and interventions are provided through:
- Trust fund projects funded by the Ministries of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs
- Trust Fund projects funded through the French Development Agency (AFD) and the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM)
- Secondment of personnel – with about 20 currently deployed across FAO's departments and strategic objectives

In addition to these forms of support, synergies are sought with other resource partners according to the field of assistance. A further feature of French support is the strengthening of regional cooperation and integration, particularly in Africa, including global platforms such as CGIAR, the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and the Global Platform for Rural Advisory Services.

Supporting forest management and rehabilitation

The French Global Environment Facility is funding the 2.65 million euro project "Optimizing the production of goods and services of Mediterranean forest ecosystems in the context of global changes." This regional cooperation project, prepared by the FAO Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-Silva Mediterranea in 2010, aims to promote the sustainable management of forest ecosystems and explore REDD+ opportunities in the region. Several activities have been successfully completed in pilot sites located in the partner countries: Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey.

Coordinated by Plan Bleu and the Silva Mediterranea Secretariat, project activities have included climate change vulnerability assessments, conducted in close collaboration with national and international experts. Resulting analyses have enabled: i) identification of areas likely to be more affected by anthropogenic pressures and climate change; and ii) implementation of practices encouraging regeneration, restoration and protection of vulnerable but valuable ecosystems. Such activities in turn support decision-making on adaptive forest ecosystem management and strategic REDD+ options in the region.

In addition to funds, France provides an outposted professional to support activities of the Silva Mediterranea secretariat and the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests (CPMF) at FAO.

Strengthening cooperation in key research areas

Two agreements to step up joint activities in key areas of research were recently signed between FAO and French institutions, including the French Agricultural Research Organization (CIRAD). Serving to coordinate CIRAD's strategy with FAO's strategic objectives, this agreement concerns areas of mutual concern to France and FAO: agro-ecology, family farming, climate change, nutrition, crisis management, agrifood processing and animal health. CIRAD and FAO are partners in a number of other initiatives, including World Agriculture Watch, the secretariat of which is hosted by FAO, including two officers assigned by the Government.

Agro-ecology

France is playing a prominent role in championing agro-ecology, an emerging set of practices that aim to apply ecological principles to the design of sustainable food systems. It provided financial and in-kind contributions (totalling US\$100 000 euros) to the International Symposium on Agro-ecology for Food Security and Nutrition, held in September 2014 at FAO in Rome and to regional follow-up workshops scheduled in 2015. The September Symposium event was attended by more than 400 participants from 61 countries, including four Agriculture Ministers (from Costa Rica, France, Japan and Senegal).

Considered a milestone, the Symposium extended the debate on related issues and succeeded in gaining recognition of agroecology as a practice, a science and a movement. France has proposed establishing a network for research institutions working this important field, with CIRAD and INRA providing leadership. It has expressed support for the idea of a large International Conference on Agro-ecology in Paris in 2016.

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

José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General

