The partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Kingdom of Morocco spans many decades and several areas of work. Since opening its representation in Rabat in 1982, FAO has implemented over 130 national projects in Morocco, in addition to more than sixty regional projects. FAO assisted Morocco to set up more than thirty projects that mobilized nearly US$1.8 billion of investment from international financial institutions. FAO’s work in Morocco is focused especially on policy support and strategies for sustainable development through the Plan Maroc Vert, with upcoming projects on Blue Growth and the Modelling System for Agricultural Impacts of Climate Change.

South-South Cooperation: A key to development
South-South Cooperation (SSC) is the mutual sharing and exchange of key development solutions – knowledge, experiences and good practices, policies, technology, know-how, and resources – between and among countries in the global south. Triangular Cooperation involves partnerships between two or more developing countries along with a third partner, typically a traditional resource partner and/or multilateral organization.

FAO’s strategy for SSC is based on four pillars:

1. **Facilitating the exchange and sharing of development solutions**, providing practical guidance and support to ensure high quality knowledge sharing (short-, medium- and long-term exchanges, learning routes, study tours and training);

2. **Fostering knowledge management and networks, connecting South-South solution providers with seekers** (supply and demand), scaling up knowledge sharing and enhancing two-way learning among a wide range of southern actors;

3. **Facilitating upstream policy support**, including policy dialogue and knowledge sharing among policy-makers; and

4. **Fostering an enabling environment, mobilizing broader partnerships and resources** and raising the visibility of the value of SSC.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation are playing a greater role than ever before in tackling food insecurity. Global demand for southern development solutions that have been tested and proven effective is at an all-time high. Since 1996, FAO has been facilitating SSC and Triangular Cooperation and has fielded over 1 800 experts and technicians in more than 50 countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Near East.
Morocco - Guinea South-South Cooperation Agreement

In a recently launched initiative, Morocco and FAO are working together to support Guinea in sustainable agricultural production and improving natural resources management. The initiative includes development of irrigated agriculture, support to the horticulture value chain, and capacity building for the Ministry of Agriculture of Guinea. It seeks to contribute to Guinea’s effort in fighting hunger and extreme poverty in the country. Morocco will share its technical expertise and lessons learned from its national agricultural strategy, the “Plan Maroc Vert”, which promotes sustainable growth in agricultural production and is seen as the engine behind Morocco’s achievement of the First Millennium Development Goal’s hunger target. Furthermore, Morocco’s support for SSC in Agriculture and Fisheries in Guinea and other countries in the region is financed through a recently established trust fund, allowing for public as well as private sector contributions. Through the fund, Morocco contributes to achieving food security in African countries by supporting sustainable agricultural production and improving natural resources management.

Viet Nam - Chad

Under a tripartite SSC agreement with FAO, Vietnamese experts helped Chad implement a series of activities aimed at improving the African country’s food security. The activities included irrigation for rice growing and horticulture, increased cereals production, artisanal fishing, bee-keeping and food processing. Fifteen Vietnamese experts and technicians helped Chad implement the activities over the course of two years. The US$2 million in costs were covered by Chad through a trust fund established with FAO, which also provided technical assistance.

Purchase from Africans for Africa

The Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa) initiative was launched in 2012, with funding from the Government of Brazil, to promote food and nutrition security and income generation among vulnerable farmers and communities in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger and Senegal. Inspired by Brazil’s food purchase programme – part of the country’s successful “Zero Hunger” campaign – PAA Africa buys cereals and legumes from smallholder farmers to supply local school feeding programmes. PAA Africa was an expression of political will from the leaders of the participating countries, and an excellent model of SSC.

The school feeding programme has been introduced in several African countries, providing nutritious food to children in schools. FAO and its partners support groups of farmers to become more involved in producing and marketing food, contributing to supplement and diversify diets in school feeding programmes, while strengthening dialogue with public policies. On the production side, FAO offers its technical expertise to provide direct support to smallholder farmers on distribution of seeds and agricultural inputs, harvest and post-harvest training, integrated pest-management and school gardens for better nutrition. These activities are boosting agricultural production and creating more income opportunities for small holder farmers through direct local purchases of food.
Regional Water Scarcity Initiative in the Near East

The Near East and North Africa Region (NENA) faces the challenges of addressing a wide range of complex and intertwined issues associated with the management of natural resources, particularly land and water, and securing food supply for a growing population.

To address these challenges, FAO has launched a Regional Initiative on Water Scarcity. The overall goal of the initiative is to support member countries in identifying and streamlining policies and best practices in agriculture water management, that can significantly contribute to boosting agriculture productivity, improving food security and sustaining water resources. The pilot phase of the initiative identified critical areas that require action; in the next steps, FAO will assist in the formulation of a regional collaborative strategy and build broad partnerships to support its implementation.

Work done under the initiative will encourage countries to learn from successful tactics used by other countries to improve management and the use of rainfed, irrigated and groundwater systems through an innovative approach, including:

• the creation of a broad consensus on the water reform agenda among all involved stakeholders.
• the acknowledgement of farmers’ role in prompting a shift in the way water resources are used and managed.
• the involvement of the private sector as the actual manager of the food value chain and the supplier of the latest available technologies.
• the establishment of partnerships which are action-oriented and results-based.
• the development of tools to concretely measure results and collect evidence to support policy-making and decision-making processes.

WATER SCARCITY

Simply stated, water scarcity occurs when demand for freshwater exceeds supply in a specified domain.

The three main dimensions that characterize water scarcity are:

1. scarcity in availability of fresh water of acceptable quality with respect to aggregated demand, in the simple case of physical water shortage;
2. scarcity in access to water services, because of the failure of institutions in place to ensure reliable supply of water to users; and
3. scarcity due to the lack of adequate infrastructure, irrespective of the level of water resources, due to financial constraints.

In the last two cases, countries may have a relatively high level of water resources endowment, but are unable to capture and distribute them because of limited financial resources for infrastructure development or lack of institutional capacity to maintain and manage them appropriately.

In the last century, demand for water use has been growing globally at more than twice the rate of population increase, and an increasing number of regions, including the Middle East and North Africa, are reaching the limit at which water services can be sustainably delivered. Demographic growth and economic development are putting unprecedented pressure on renewable, but finite water resources, especially in arid regions. Although water scarcity can be expected to intensify with most forms of economic development, if correctly identified, many of its causes can be predicted, avoided or mitigated.
Waterhole monitoring in Kenya

Pastoral communities in Kenya depend on watering holes for their livestock. Water shortages have led to conflict among communities and for some pastoralists to give up their livelihoods entirely. Waterholes are therefore critical for survival.

FAO is working with the University of Nairobi and Texas A&M University to expand a program that monitors waterhole levels in order to help pastoralist communities. The monitoring system uses satellite imaging and remote sensing to show trends in water levels, the health and availability of pasture, rainfall amounts, and how much water has evaporated into the atmosphere.

FAO’s pilot programme in Turkana County has added smart phone technology to improve the monitoring system. Community monitors are trained to use smart phones to send real-time data on water levels, which is uploaded immediately to a central database, allowing for rapid analysis and response.

Pastoralists are warned when water levels are low in one area so that they can move to areas that have sufficient water and pasture, mitigating potential conflict and overuse of natural resources. The system links early warning to response, allowing pastoral communities to plan ahead for the availability of water and other resources. The early warning system will provide data in planning for pasture production, the establishment of new water sources and other risk reduction measures. Furthermore, the database allows for the studying of drought trends, which is useful in adapting to climate change.
INNOVATION IN FAMILY FARMING

More than 500 million family farms manage the majority of the world’s agricultural land and produce most of the world’s food. Family farms are critical to ensuring global food security, caring for and protecting the natural environment and ending poverty, undernourishment and malnutrition.

Innovation in family farming happens when individuals and groups adopt new ideas, technologies or processes that, when successful, spread through communities and societies. The process is complex, involving many actors, and it cannot function in a vacuum. It is furthered by the presence of an effective innovation system, including an enabling economic and institutional environment. Innovation often builds on and adjusts local knowledge and traditional systems in combination with new sources of knowledge from formal research systems.

One fundamental driver for all innovators – including family farmers – is access to markets that reward their enterprise. Farmers with access to markets, including local markets, for their produce – whether it be food staples or cash crops – have a strong incentive to innovate. Technologies help farmers to enter the market by allowing them to produce marketable surpluses. Innovation and markets depend on, and reinforce, each other. Efficient producers’ organizations and cooperatives can also play a key role in helping farmers link to input and output markets.

Programmes and policies to promote innovation in agriculture for family farms, including those supported by FAO, focus on providing inclusive research, advisory services, market institutions and infrastructure that the private sector is typically unable to provide.

Home grown food assistance in Somalia

Agricultural communities in Somalia – especially in the country’s grain basket south-central region – have, over the last two decades, been severely affected by conflict and recurrent drought, which has resulted in the widespread failure of crops and poor yields. The European Union (EU), Austria, FAO and World Food Programme (WFP) are working with local farmers to change that. A new initiative backed by the four partners has helped Somali farmers become suppliers of high-quality food assistance for their fellow Somalis.

For over 12 months, experts from FAO and WFP supported by the EU have worked with dozens of farmers in several communities to train them in post-harvest handling, storage and warehouse management in order to increase the quality of their production and limit losses by keeping the grain free of contamination and pests. Farmers also learned how to grade their grain. These new skills are aimed at increasing the quality of their produce.

Now they are able to produce maize that meets international quality standards in sufficient quantities to sell it to WFP, which will use the locally grown grain in its food assistance programmes for the most vulnerable and food-insecure Somalis. According to food production data, Somali farmers only meet 40 percent of the country’s domestic cereal demand. FAO and WFP will jointly seek to scale up this initiative to ensure that small scale farmers have better opportunities to access agricultural markets, to become competitive players in domestic and international food trade and thus to improve their lives.
Agricultural commercialization in Zimbabwe

The EU, FAO and the Government of Zimbabwe partnered to assist poor smallholder farmers to boost production, productivity and engage in commercial agriculture through integrated farming approaches. The four-year US$19 million programme is managed by FAO and focuses on smallholder irrigation and livestock production support activities.

Existing smallholder irrigation schemes have generally performed poorly as a result of technical and financial problems. Currently only 61 percent (10 000 ha) of total land equipped with irrigation facilities is functional. This project aims to increase this area by an additional 1 000 ha by improving irrigation infrastructure, capacity development of farmers to practice irrigation farming as a business and strengthening of community-level Irrigation Management Committees.

The livestock component of the programme supports 40 000 poor farmers who practise mixed crop-livestock production in regions characterized by low rainfall, frequent mid-season dry spells and extensive crop failure. By improving livestock policies, animal health systems and strengthening the whole livestock value chain the programme allows for more predictable and sustained income of smallholder farmers as well as improved general nutrition of farmers by ensuring access to animal products.
In recent years, Morocco and FAO have strengthened their partnership through new initiatives in South-South Cooperation. In June 2014 they signed a tripartite agreement through which FAO now assists Morocco in offering technical assistance to the Republic of Guinea. Through this and future South-South Cooperation projects, Morocco will share knowledge, know-how, experience and lessons learned, further contributing to achieving food security in African countries by supporting sustainable agricultural production and improving natural resources management.

José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General

“I hope that we can continue to work closely towards our common objectives, to the benefit of the people of Morocco and the people of the region.”

José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General