



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations

# FAO REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Europe and Central Asia



# Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms for improved rural livelihoods and poverty reduction

STRENGTHENING LIVELIHOODS | REDUCING RURAL POVERTY

## ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

Since the land reforms of the 1990s, dualistic farm structures characterize the landscape of most transition countries in Europe and Central Asia, with large numbers of small subsistence and semi-commercial family farms.

Poverty, social vulnerability and other difficulties could prevent rural communities from fulfilling their role as important building blocks of food security. Society as a whole tends to undervalue the potential of family farming to produce quality goods and services, and contribute to economic, environmental and social sustainability.

By enhancing productivity and income levels through sustainable intensification of production, better organization, adequate services and integration into agrifood value chains, this Regional Initiative can contribute to the global goals of eradicating rural poverty and achieving food security and sustainable growth.

**COUNTRIES IN FOCUS:** Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, FYR Macedonia and Tajikistan.

**AREAS OF SUPPORT:** policy, institution and governance, farms, communities.



Photo: ©FAO/Mustafa Coskun

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Activities are in the following areas:

- sustainable management of agricultural land and water resources
- intensification of smallholders' production in a sustainable manner
- strengthening the organizations of small producers and family farms
- enhancing rural services – such as advisory services and micro-loans.

Results are foreseen mainly in:

- dissemination of sustainable agricultural best practices
- strengthened governance to support producers and resource managers
- enhanced and equitable access by smallholders to productive resources, services, organizations and markets
- development of inclusive and efficient agribusinesses and agrifood chains.

The Initiative complements regional and global integration processes, such as the European Union's European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD), and the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security," and builds upon results of the United Nations International Year of Family Farming 2014.

FAO is working with partners to achieve even more in this area: the European Union, the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group for South Eastern Europe, and LANDNET, an informal regional network dealing with land tenure issues.

The Regional Initiative pays attention to technical, social, economic and environmental aspects. Inclusiveness of women, youth and vulnerable groups is also a key principle.



Photo: ©FAO/Vasily Maximov

## IN PRACTICE

Practical activities being carried out by FAO through the Initiative include:

- Conducting studies on smallholders and family farming in each focus country, with a view to scaling up country programmes for a more significant contribution to the region.
- Strengthening organizations of small producers and family farms, at both community and policy level, in several countries.
- Promoting aquaculture and culture based fisheries in Tajikistan and alternative use of water resources in Armenia.
- Developing farmer field schools in Kyrgyzstan to promote modern crop management techniques.
- Enhancing rural services such as advisory services, and supporting development of a national land consolidation programme in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.
- In Georgia, supporting the rehabilitation of seed production systems, and, in the course of a regional event, of Integrated Pest Management practices for smallholders, through expert consultations.
- Strengthening cooperation among farmers and improve agricultural extension services.
- Developing a national rural development strategy with the Ministry of Agriculture for improved programme preparation, policy-making, monitoring and implementation processes.

## CONTACT

**Morten Hartvigsen**

Regional Initiative Delivery Manager  
Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia  
Email: Morten.Hartvigsen@fao.org

## MORE INFORMATION

[www.fao.org/europe/regional-perspectives/smallholders-family-farms/en/](http://www.fao.org/europe/regional-perspectives/smallholders-family-farms/en/)

# Improving Agrifood Trade and Market Integration

ENHANCED TRADE RELATIONS | STRONGER SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

## ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

The primary goal of the Regional Initiative on Agrifood Trade and Market Integration is to support member countries in enhancing the agrifood trade policy environment for small and medium-sized enterprises. A better trade policy environment for modern agrifood markets requires the development of capacity for both trade agreements and domestic food safety and quality standards. The Initiative consists of three main components to support the sharing of ideas, experiences and solutions across interventions.

COUNTRIES IN FOCUS: Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

While international trade policy is usually implemented at the border, adherence to food safety and quality standards concerns national food safety systems as well as food safety and quality control at the enterprise level. This means that a supportive policy environment for modern agrifood trade encompasses not only border policies, but also policies and institutions at the national and enterprise level.

### COMPONENT 1 - Implementation of trade agreements to increase access to new markets

Elements: Capacity development on WTO agreements

International trade agreements, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, form the basic rules for international trade, and shape the environment for formulating domestic trade policies. A supportive policy environment for trade must first and foremost be built on the principles found in the WTO agreements. The Regional Initiative foresees training of civil servants and private industry representatives on global trade issues, including market access, domestic support measures, sanitary and phytosanitary issues, technical barriers to trade, trade dispute resolution and trade facilitation.



Photo: ©FAO/Alessia Pierdomenico

### COMPONENT 3 - Supportive policy environment for export diversification

Elements: Export diversification assessments, export value chain analysis and policy recommendations, outbound trade promotion strategies

Countries should aim to create a supportive policy environment to diversify their export of food products. This component involves identification of potential export commodities, analysis of value chains in selected countries with recommendations, and assistance in the preparation of export promotion campaigns for food products. Activities combine analysis and capacity building in order to achieve an improved policy environment for export diversification.

### COMPONENT 2 - Increased capacity to implement global food quality standards

Elements: phytosanitary and the International Plant Protection Convention, food safety standards, best practices and system architecture, sanitary/veterinary control issues, geographical indication and food quality branding.

Global agricultural markets have become increasingly complex in the past two decades, mainly due to food standards – food safety in particular. Control of nation states over global food regulations is weakening, while the private sector (for- and non-profit), international organizations, and other certification bodies have become involved in food safety standard setting, implementation and enforcement. Meanwhile, buyers, such as supermarkets, large processors and importers, prefer products with a set of value-added services – related to quality and safety of food. FAO helps focus countries adopt global food-quality standards.

Civil servants, private enterprises and academia receive training in modern risk analysis methods, and in designing strategies for ensuring food, sanitary and phytosanitary safety. To upgrade food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary standards in the focus countries, civil servants learn about standards and good practices of Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention, and the World Organization for Animal Health. Geographic indications are promoted as a branding tool and means to increase food quality.

## CONTACT

David Sedik

Regional Initiative Delivery Manager

Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Email: David.Sedik@fao.org

## MORE INFORMATION

[www.fao.org/europe/regional-perspectives/agri-food-trade/en/](http://www.fao.org/europe/regional-perspectives/agri-food-trade/en/)



# Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia  
34 Benczur utca  
H-1068 Budapest, Hungary  
[www.fao.org/europe](http://www.fao.org/europe)

Cover photo: ©FAO/Oliver Bunic

© FAO 2016  
I5669E/1705.16