



INFORMATION MATERIAL

FAO's Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for promoting decent rural employment



Sustainable Development Goal 8

The Integrated Country Approach (ICA) programme contributes to Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is dedicated to decent work: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."

Decent rural employment is key to achieving food security and alleviating poverty. FAO has committed, through its Strategic Framework, to foster the enabling environment in support of decent rural employment (DRE), with special focus on rural youth and women's economic and social empowerment. One of the FAO's flagship programmes in this area is the **Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for promoting decent rural employment**. The ICA programme has been implemented so far in five countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, mainly funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, under the FAO Multi-Partner Support Mechanism.

An integrated approach



The ICA approach mobilizes **several core functions in synergy**, with the aim to induce **sustainable policy change**. The integrated nature of ICA also refers to its **multilevel scope** (global, regional and national).

At global and regional level, ICA contributes to FAO's overall efforts to promote DRE issues in the agricultural and rural development discourse. Such active mainstreaming goes hand in hand with FAO's normative work on DRE, setting international standards connected with food and agriculture.

At country level, ICA focuses on enhancing the **employment content** of national strategies, policies and programmes for agricultural and rural development. This will optimize, in the medium to long term, the contribution of the sector to improve the quantity and the quality of rural jobs.

Addressing the employment challenge requires increased capacities across several institutions, as well as more responsible public and private investments in agri-food systems and in rural development. For this reason, ICA **advocates** for the need to harness the untapped employment potential of agriculture and other rural sectors, supports **capacity development** of core rural institutions, produces **knowledge** documents and guidance materials, and facilitates the establishment of **private-public partnerships** and **multi-stakeholder mechanisms** for dialogue. Interventions are tailored to country demands and capacity development needs through in-depth scoping exercises conducted during the inception phase of the Programme.

Gender equality and **environmental sustainability** are mainstreamed as cross-cutting issues. ICA activities and approaches are designed to guarantee that the knowledge products developed and technical support provided are gender aware and actively contribute to reduce gender inequalities in the rural labour market.

An inclusive approach

The ICA programme actively encourages **dialogue between agriculture and labour stakeholders**. It also fosters cross-sectoral **policy coherence** towards decent rural employment, in particular among agriculture, employment, social protection and youth and gender-related policies.

The **ICA partners with national public and private institutions**, including ministries responsible for agriculture, youth, gender and labour issues, producers' organizations, youth groups, national statistic offices and research centres. Rural young women and men are the ultimate beneficiaries of the Programme, especially the

poor, unemployed and underemployed. Through their organizations, the rural youth are also engaged in policy dialogue and in multi-stakeholder working groups.

Finally, ICA promotes collaboration among FAO and other United Nations Organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) or the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and other development partners to bring their specific expertise to the benefit of the rural youth employment cause.

A phased approach

ICA has been implemented in five countries in different phases. The progressive refinement and adaption of the Programme to different contexts has contributed to a systematized but flexible approach for employment-smart rural transitions.

- A **first phase** of the Programme was implemented in Malawi and Tanzania, in the period 2011-2014. Based on participatory needs assessments, FAO facilitated the commitment of national stakeholders to a long-term employment theory of change, providing systematic support on decent work inclusion into the design of policies, strategies and programmes, such as the *Tanzanian National Agricultural Policy* (2013). In particular, technical support was provided on youth employment, child labour prevention in agriculture and gender equality promotion. This first implementation phase enabled the definition and field-testing of different methodologies and tools, which have been collected into the DRE Toolbox.
- The **second phase** of the Programme (2015-2017) targets Senegal, Uganda and Guatemala. Building on the lessons learnt of the previous phase, the support provided is more selective. Only one major entry point is selected - youth employment - and two/three core processes to be supported are agreed with the Government during the inception phase.

The focus is on providing policy and strategic support to enhance the enabling environment for youth engagement in agriculture. Depending on the specific country or regional priorities, ICA could be easily tailored to other thematic entry points, such as child labour prevention, rural women economic empowerment or labour improvements in family farming.



In Senegal, ICA works with the Ministry of Youth and in particular with the *Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes* (ANPEJ) on the development and implementation of the *National Rural Youth Employment Policy* and its related strategy. Also, FAO and ANPEJ are piloting a model to support youth engagement in agribusiness.

In Uganda, ICA collaborates with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) to develop the *National Strategy for Youth in Agriculture*. It also supports knowledge generation on the specific challenges and job prospects of adolescents and school dropouts (14-17 age group) in rural areas, and accompanies the MAAIF and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in incorporating youth related considerations in their statistic tools.

In Guatemala, the ICA programme is accompanying the development of a *Rural Youth Employment Strategy* in the Department of San Marcos, under the lead of the Ministry of Labour. An assessment has been conducted with the national think tank ASIES with the aim of increasing knowledge on youth challenges and job prospects in the rural areas of the Department. As part of the Strategy, FAO will support the establishment of the first *Ventanilla de Empleo Rural* (one-stop shop for rural employment).

In all three countries legal studies are being conducted on the application of labour standards in rural areas, with a focus on young people; as well as assessments of existing national approaches for youth employment promotion.



Resources

Core tools developed under the ICA programme are:

- The **DRE Toolbox** is a repository of practical tools including case studies, guidance materials and other useful resources, organized in different modules that cover the main components of FAO's approach to mainstreaming decent rural employment.
- The **DRE database** of policies, programmes, studies and institutions, which comprises an internal version for FAO staff and an external version for the general public.
- The **DRE e-Learning Course** (forthcoming in 2016), which provides knowledge and guidance on how to promote DRE to FAO's staff as well as policy-makers and technical staff in developing countries.

