



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

ALBANIA AND FAO

PARTNERING TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the past 17 years, FAO has played an active role in supporting agricultural and rural development in Albania. The Organization has provided a variety of technical assistance, ranging from policy advice to natural resource management, land administration, forestry and fisheries interventions. The current focus is on transforming the country's agriculture sector to support the European Union integration process, agricultural value chains and rural entrepreneurship for smallholders, with special emphasis on youth and women.

Strengthened country focus

Key elements of the CPF include: balancing territorial development of rural areas; promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and balanced economic development; and enhancing farm viability as well as the competitiveness of agriculture and primary food processing, while progressively aligning the sector with EU standards and transferring knowledge and innovation.

Advancing the 2030 Agenda and EU integration

Agriculture has traditionally been the backbone of Albania's economy. FAO supports the country in aligning its institutional capacities and agricultural development strategies with the 2030 Agenda and EU integration by continuing to provide technical guidance related to policy, agricultural statistics, food quality and safety, and the development of a legal and institutional framework for organic, traditional and geographical-indication products.

In cooperation with the Government, the UN Country Team and the Institute of Statistics, FAO has contributed to the preparation of a baseline study on SDG indicators in agriculture. This assistance also includes continued support for capacity building at the national level to measure and report on the progress in implementing SDGs.

Matching FAO's expertise to Albania's development priorities

FAO assistance in Albania is shaped by the **2019-2021 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF)**, which is centred on two priority areas.

- ➔ **Increasing rural income and improving support to smallholders and family farms**, particularly for rural women and youth
- ➔ **Strengthening legal and institutional frameworks for agrifood production and climate change resilience** for increased competitiveness and sustainability in the agriculture sector

Jointly formulated with the Government and other development partners, the CPF reflects relevant national development policy priorities, including the policy for rural development, national support schemes and institutional development. An underlying priority is to ensure the country's gradual alignment with EU requirements and standards. The CPF is fully in line with the UN Development Assistance Framework for Albania.

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Smallholder development

Agriculture in Albania is characterized by a large number of smallholder farms. These farms face challenges in modernizing production methods and increasing productivity while preserving the benefits of an intact pool of agro-biodiversity and natural resources and securing rural livelihoods. To overcome such challenges, there is a need for smallholders to diversify their income and employment possibilities, capitalizing on direct marketing and rural tourism as increasingly important economic factors in rural areas.

“Agriculture and food security are the entry points for growth and development strategies in many countries.”

FAO Director-General

FAO's interventions in this areas aim to strengthen the technical and entrepreneurial capacities of farmers, enabling them to add value to primary production and to implement a diversified household

income strategy, adopting proven practices for rural income diversification. Such interventions should help smallholders and family farms access existing investment funds, while also improving the capacities of Government, farmers' associations and other stakeholders to boost the rural economy and raise living conditions.

Climate change and agriculture

FAO in Albania is being proactively engaged in activities aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change on agriculture. Activities have included support to central and local institutions, extension services and farmer communities through awareness raising and capacity building for climate-smart agriculture, integrated pest management and disaster risk management, including post-disaster needs assessment in agriculture.

Cooperating to manage Adriatic fisheries

Albania, Croatia, Italy, Montenegro, and Slovenia share coastal access to the Adriatic Sea and its marine fisheries. Under the FAO regional project AdriaMed, these five countries have made great strides towards cooperative management of Adriatic fisheries and aquaculture, as recommended in FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. Standardized methodologies and scientific cooperation, improved capacity for fisheries monitoring, training in data collection, formulation of fisheries management strategies and harmonized legislation are some of the many tangible results.

Reducing food loss and waste

Food loss and waste in Europe and Central Asia has major implications on food and nutrition security as a result of the inefficiencies manifested in food value chains. The effects include a reduction in the availability of micronutrient-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, decreasing incomes of smallholder farmers, and an increase in food prices, which also affects urban consumers.

Through an intervention implemented in Albania, Armenia, North Macedonia and the Republic of Moldova, FAO is targeting food loss and waste reduction in the context of national food systems and climate change. The aim is to mitigate the pressure put on national food systems by increased demand for production, aggravated population and income growth, urbanization and changing food consumption preferences and patterns.

Preventing African Swine Fever from entering the Balkans

Assisted by FAO, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia have joined forces to reduce the risk of incursions and improve the preparation for the rapid detection and control of African Swine Fever in the Balkans. A regional project is being implemented to provide instruments for raising awareness and increasing prevention and preparedness as a key to minimizing the negative impacts of the disease on rural livelihoods as well as the pig value chain and trade.

Sustainable management of inland fishery resources

FAO is working with three countries in the Western Balkans, including Albania, to improve the valuation of inland fisheries regarding its contribution to livelihoods, recreation and food security. Policymakers are being provided with reliable and comparable information on which to based decisions that affect fisheries' habitats. The intervention will provide tools for data collection and measurement to support the management of these countries' inland fisheries through assessment of current practices. In addition, the development of good practice guidelines will help policymakers and stakeholders, such as angler associations and fishing communities, to facilitate sustainable management of freshwater fisheries in the subregion.