In building back from COVID-19, the world has an opportunity to accelerate the transition to more sustainable agrifood systems. That means systems that not only feed the world but help improve people’s health and nutrition, create jobs, raise incomes, reduce waste, protect the environment and shrink greenhouse gas emissions. Investment is critical to that.

The FAO Investment Centre helps countries make more and better investments in food and agriculture. This allows countries to make significant progress on their national goals and Sustainable Development Goal commitments – from ending poverty and hunger by 2030 to reducing inequalities and protecting the health of the planet for future generations.

Mindful that public funding alone is not enough, the Centre helps countries create the right policy environment to attract responsible private investment and to promote the appropriate instruments for financing them, including blended finance.

Despite a challenging year, the Centre’s global team provided its full range of investment support services – from project design and implementation to policy dialogue and capacity development – and seized opportunities to innovate. All told, the Centre carried out nearly 1,000 investment support activities in 120 countries.

Working closely with member governments, International Financing Institutions, regional banks and FAO teams around the world, the Centre designed 38 new projects worth over USD 6.6 billion in investment – a 16 percent increase overall from 2019. The Centre contributed to 31 agricultural strategies, 18 policy and analytical studies and 46 sector studies. It also facilitated 24 public-private policy dialogue processes and participated in FAO Hand-in-Hand teams in 34 countries.

Preventing the global COVID-19 health crisis from becoming a food crisis became a top priority. The Centre produced timely policy briefs to guide governments’ decision-making and collaborated on One Health studies in Asia and the Pacific. It also developed response packages and worked with longstanding partners like the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to reorient their investments to address COVID-19.
**FUTURE PERSPECTIVES**
Looking ahead, the Centre will expand its investment support, helping countries access the latest innovations, knowledge, financial instruments and technologies, including digital technologies, to achieve lasting impact at scale.

**Transformation of agrifood systems**
The Centre is developing a new generation of sustainable agrifood investment strategies and projects that stimulate economic growth, create decent jobs and improve the livelihoods and well-being of small-scale producers, especially women and youth.

Better understanding leads to better design. Together with the European Union, the Centre is supporting countries with national food systems assessments and dialogue. The goal is to complete more than 50 assessments by the end of 2021. These initial findings will provide rich inputs for stronger policy and investment decisions around agrifood systems, with early analysis already feeding into the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit.

**Private agrifood investment**
Blended finance, though not a silver bullet, can help strengthen the resilience of small-scale farmers and agribusinesses at risk by mobilizing much-needed capital and stimulating growth. Good lessons are already emerging from the Centre’s initiatives with the European Union, notably AgrIntel and AgrInvest.

**Green financing**
Given the pressure agrifood systems are under from climate change, the Centre is boosting its green and climate financing portfolio, using FAO tools to incorporate climate risk considerations into its investment support. These range from tools to access geospatial data to those enabling better water and livestock management and reduced emissions, to name a few.

**Knowledge and innovation-intensive solutions**
Addressing the knowledge gap in investment-related resources, the Centre’s Knowledge for Investment (K4I) programme seeks to raise the visibility of investment matters and engage with new audiences. Equally, the Centre intends to have a stronger voice in the public debate on the need to scale up public and private investment in sustainable agrifood systems. Investments that address the vulnerabilities in our global agrifood systems, from farm to plate, can help the world build back better.

“THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF INVESTMENTS MADE TODAY SHAPE THE IMPACT AND OUTCOMES OF TOMORROW.”

MOHAMED MANSSOURI
FAO INVESTMENT CENTRE DIRECTOR

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