



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

**COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK
FOR THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN
2017 to 2021**

July 2017

Introduction:

The Country Programming Framework (CPF) sets out strategic pillars of expertise to guide FAO partnership with and support to the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA) – bringing together innovative international best practices and global standards with national and regional acquaintance during four years from 2017 to 2021.

The CPF was prepared following consultations and agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), donors and other interested parties and supported by extensive reviews of published materials related to the agricultural sector in Afghanistan (including donor plans and priorities for the relevant period). This is a revision following a major policy change by the GoIRA and the International Community agreed at the Brussels Conference in October 2016; as well as in line with the reform agenda of National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Programme (2016-2020); Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Afghanistan National Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSeN); and Citizen Charter Programme (CCP).

Country context and priority:

When the current government took over the power, it had several challenges to address including the agriculture. Similarly, in the London Conference on Afghanistan (December 2014) the GoIRA presented “Realizing Self Reliance” (RSR), a document that sets out the vision for development of Afghanistan in a renewed relationship with international partners; this includes a commitment to bolstering private sector confidence, promoting growth, creating jobs and peace and security. For agriculture sector the emphasis is on raising agricultural productivity, by fostering private public partnerships. The role of MAIL is seen as one of planning, regulation and enforcement entities rather than direct as service provider. While within the agricultural sector, key areas of focus are irrigation and developing value chains.

On 5 October 2016, the European Union and the government of Afghanistan co-hosted the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan. This conference brought together 75 countries and 26 international organizations and agencies. They undertook to ensure continued international political and financial support to Afghanistan over the next four years.

The National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Strategy is a framework for agriculture development in which the emphasis will shift towards a farmer centric view from the current institutional view. The Comprehensive Agricultural Development Strategy includes; 1) development of the irrigation infrastructure (also supports MEW’s priorities; 2) increased wheat production; 3) horticulture and the development of value chain; 4) Livestock production; 5) Climate Sensitive Natural Resource Management; 6) Food and Nutrition Security and Resilience Building; and 7) Institutional Reform and Capacity Building.

Besides, the government priorities, the GoIRA has taken action to affirm its commitment to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). GoIRA has designated the Ministry of Economy (MoEc) as the lead line ministry and focal point for the coordination, monitoring and reporting on Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (A-SDGs). FAOAF has identified around seven goals (goal 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 13 and 15) and indicators to contribute to, however, these indicators need to contextualize locally. The Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSeN) which GoIRA endorsed in April 2017, is Afghanistan’s key food security and nutrition policy framework.

FAO’s contribution and expected results:

Since reconstruction efforts began in the early 2000s, FAO has been a close partner of line Ministries in areas of mutual interest. FAO’s representation office is based inside MAIL compound and the projects are also embedded with the relevant ministries. FAO has been working at policy, capacity development and implementation levels to deliver improvements in food security and nutrition in the country.

FAO will support MAIL, MEW and MoPH and other stakeholders to achieve its objectives through capacity development and direct programme implementation in four specific pillars of FAO’s technical expertise:

1. Better governance through improved capacity for policy planning, land reform, decentralization, and management of common natural resources;
2. Fostering expansion of irrigation and field water management;
3. Intensive agriculture for surplus commercialization, value chains development, and job creation
4. Supporting vulnerable farmers for improved food & nutrition security, resilience, and emergency response to natural and man-made disasters and climate change

Climate Change, Gender and Capacity Development are cross-cutting issues across the Country Programme: Several projects in the CPF focus specifically on these issues. Women for example are empowered to have access

to productive resources especially markets through specific projects aimed at transmitting technology to women-friendly agricultural business. Similarly, Climate change adaptation is tackled through Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) projects, improved governance of common resources, or the promotion of renewable energy.

1. Better governance through improved capacity for policy planning, land reform, decentralization, management of common natural resources:

Improving governance remains the government's first priority, as rampant corruption, uncertainty about property rights, a lack of state effectiveness, the conflicts between the host community and the returnees on land issues and legitimacy are undermining other efforts to promote development. FAO is pioneer of governance reform in the agricultural sector: mainly in management of land and common property resources, such as graze land, water or forests; capacity development for the governance of the agricultural sector; and support to evidence-based policy making and participatory community led service provision.

1.1. Protection and enforcement of Land Property Rights:

The Independent Land Management Authority (ARAZI) is "Afghanistan's prime and sole, independent land administration and management body, managing state owned lands, and providing land related services and information to citizens, institutions and investors." The institution and its mandate are particularly important as a vehicle for peace building and for the sustainable use of land, needed after over four decades of injustices related to land entitlements and access. FAO is currently support the development of a five years programme for ARAZI to provide and enforce transparent land titling, zoning, planning and property rights. Initial activities will include land allocation for commercial purposes, mediation and arbitration support, mapping, survey and registration of land, land policy development and legislative reform.

1.2. Sustainable Management of Common Resources:

Population growth and Climate Change are increasing the already acute pressure on natural common resources in Afghanistan, fostering social tensions, and ethnic violence. The over-exploitation of grazing lands is blamed by many analysts as the cause of inter-tribal tensions. Over-exploitation of grazing lands also leads to land degradation, a phenomenon accentuated by climate change. Water and forestry are also common property resources that are unsustainably exploited in the country, contributing to social tensions at the community level.

FAO will support sustainable grazing lands and forest management through a community-based approach by building capacity at the national and local levels, of government decision-makers and local communities to plan and coordinate the use of vulnerable ecosystems, while strengthening the livelihood of those who depend on these resources. Taking stock of its experience across Asia, FAO will also ensure that biodiversity is conserved and carbon emissions are reduced through the promotion of sustainable and efficient approaches for biomass energy use, pioneering the development of renewable energy in Afghanistan and the sustainable use of natural resources for Peace.

1.3. Support to Evidence-based Policy Planning:

In order to Improve policy planning capacity, as the Ministry recognizes that "*much of its planning is based on unverifiable data from provincial offices and anecdotal information for projects, resulting in contradictory and unreliable information*"¹. Through the training of national, provincial, and local staff, FAO will (1) strengthen institutional and technical capacity for monitoring and analysis of agricultural production systems and development of National Agro-Ecological Zoning (NAEZ) and Land Resources Information Management Systems (LRIMS); (2) strengthen agriculture monitoring, analysis, communication, and use of data and information for decision-making in agriculture and food security; and (3) strengthen knowledge management, dissemination and application of information at local level, including integrating lessons learned into planning, and in operating a project monitoring and evaluation activity. Furthermore, FAO is supporting the Afghanistan Soil Information System in order to monitor soil vulnerability and ensure that information is available to prioritized sustainable land management interventions. FAO's role in the SGR will be to develop information systems able to adequately inform an early warning system with crop production forecasts and market.

1.4. Institutional Reform:

FAO has led pioneer decentralization projects in Herat, Balkh, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Kabul which are now a model for the MAIL decentralization programme. The strategy ensures that extension services are farmer centric rather than supply driven and promotes structural changes. It builds the capacity of decentralized governmental institutions in the project districts. Extension officers are trained to carry out participatory assessments with local communities to identify relevant improved livelihood strategies and the needed support. MAIL and MRRD extension officers have trained the farmers on appropriate cropping practices; later the farmers were/have

¹ Government of The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation And Livestock, 2016, National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Programme 2016-2020

organized/formed grassroots organizations and Common Interest Groups (CIGs). This “Demand-Driven Extension” model is successful at reaching women through the female educators of District Agriculture Extension Service.

2. Fostering Expansion of Irrigation and Field Water Management:

FAO has provided technical assistance for the rehabilitation of many traditional irrigation schemes. The main objectives of such interventions have been to help restore irrigated agriculture production in the rural areas of post-conflict Afghanistan through improved and reliable water supply to rehabilitated irrigation schemes.

2.1. Technical Support for Irrigation Expansion:

Irrigation expansion in the MAIL’s National Irrigation Programme is one of the key areas of focus. Over the next five years, MAIL is committed to an accelerated rehabilitation and construction program of physical works, to restore the total amount of irrigated land from 2.45 million ha to 2.7 million ha. FAO being the key partner; supports capacity development and irrigation expansion through the joint implementation. A holistic/integrated approach was adapted for irrigation expansion, from physical works; to farmers’ training in water-saving technologies; and management of the irrigation projects through institutional strengthening.

2.2. Irrigation Physical Works:

FAO and MEW are jointly implementing the physical works for over an additional area of 370,000 ha of irrigated surface, providing direct support and capacity building to government officials and grassroots irrigation associations to ensure the good maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure. The expansion of irrigation surface, combined with a hydro-power plant will boost the local economy.

2.3. Enhance Research Transfer and Extension of Irrigation Related Technologies:

FAO will also support to train farmers on the application of efficient irrigation technology; cultivation of climate-resilient crops; and through on-farm water management to reduce vulnerability to water shortages associated with extreme climate variability and drought.

2.4. Institutional Strengthening:

Since 2013, FAO is actively working with Irrigation Directorate of MAIL to improve its capacity in formulating; design; planning; implementing; monitoring; and evaluating irrigated agricultural development projects. FAO will continue to provide Technical Assistance for project management in various aspects of design and management of irrigation interventions; and in the formulation and review of national programs in this sector. Organizational and institutional capacities of public institutions organizations and networks are strengthened to support innovation and the transition toward more sustainable agricultural production systems.

3. Intensive Agriculture for Commercialization, Value Chains Development, and Job Creation:

While significant progress in governance of the agricultural sector and physical expansion of arable land are pre-requisites for agricultural-led economic growth, the core of strategy lies in developing value chains that provide producers with greater incentives to invest². Ensuring an adequate economic environment, developing improved seeds, promoting better farm technology and more storage and cold chain facilities are all objectives of the national government economic strategy to help smallholders move towards surplus production for domestic and export markets.

3.1. Developing Value Chains through Public-Private-Partnerships:

FAO is expanding its network of primary and secondary cooperatives in the livestock and dairy sector. Women in particular are incentivized through innovation funds to invest into small enterprises; specialised in dairy cattle rearing, home milk processing, forage and fodder production to develop a vibrant and dynamic dairy industry in the three central regional provinces, directly benefiting over 3500 households converging around 30 milk collection centres serving the Kabul Dairy Plant. FAO will seek to scale up this successful model to other provinces and agricultural sector. Public-private partnerships in seeds production and certification are an example.

Other interventions aimed at linking extension services to farmers’ organizations and the private sector through contract farming, and targeted investments for value chain upgrading will be piloted in Badghis, Herat, Farah and Nemroz, aiming to develop agribusinesses in these provinces. Developing horticultural and livestock markets also provides excellent opportunities to enhance women’s rights and livelihoods. FAO has had a large success in fostering women’s livelihoods; through transmission of technologies for horticulture cultivation and processing such as compost production, drip irrigation for mushroom cultivation, solar food drying, green houses, orchard cultivation, and beekeeping.

² Government of The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2016, Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework

3.2. Developing National Strategies for the Development of High-potential value-crops:

Afghanistan has comparative advantage in development of industrial and high value horticultural crops, fruit and vegetables; which highly relies on appropriate technology dissemination. FAO will support government in developing its National Agricultural Research Strategy, aiming to ensure that MAIL has the capacity to lead and transmit research for agricultural growth.

3.3. Regulation of Agricultural, Trade and Food Safety

Enabling a business-friendly environment requires both input suppliers and final-goods producers meeting the minimum regulatory standards. FAO will continue to support GoIRA, particularly MAIL and MoPH; to 1) establish a trustworthy Food Control Authority; 2) define regulatory standards through the National Codex Committee for domestic and imported agricultural goods; 3) establish protocols and procedures for inspection and enforcement; and 4) strengthen Food Safety Analysis Capacity in a network of laboratories.

4. Supporting Vulnerable Farmers for Improved Food & Nutrition Security, Resilience and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters and Climate Change:

Afghanistan has been suffering from a protracted emergency situation for 30 years. Violence in Afghanistan is spreading to areas once relatively untouched by the conflict, the threat of poverty, displacement and food insecurity is increasing. Afghanistan is also highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and is prone to a range of natural disasters – avalanches, droughts, floods and landslides – which destroy homes, crops and agricultural land, and impact access to markets. The combination of protracted conflict and high vulnerability to environmental shocks has pushed acute malnutrition to emergency levels in half of the country's provinces, and has left nearly 2.5 million people severely food insecure.

FAO will use its national and international expertise to strengthen the government and other stakeholders capacity for disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response by: 1) supporting the formulation of policies and strategies and aiding their implementation 2) technical assistance to continue the improvement of data collection, monitoring and decision making; 3) contribute to the improved capacity for co-ordination; 4) in partnership with the relevant institutions, develop innovative solutions to climate change and biodiversity issues.

FAO as co-lead, assists the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) in preparation of technical guidelines, humanitarian need overview and humanitarian response planning. FAO receives fund from CERF and CHF funding windows for delivery of agriculture and livestock protection inputs to conflict and natural disaster affected farming families.

4.1. Protection of Farmers and Pastoralists from Shocks Affecting their Food Security and Nutrition:

Promoting food security and building resilience of the vulnerable farmers requires protection from natural and man-made disasters. The resilience could be implemented through integrated pest management, to tackle local problems with an array of existing technologies learnt in participatory farmer field schools. Pastoralists – particularly the Kuchis (nomads) are protected from livestock diseases through national disease surveillance, prevention, control and awareness campaigns, aimed at eradicating two of the most common livestock diseases from the country FMD and PPR. Another initiative promoting watershed management will focus upstream and downstream interventions aimed at sustainably managing water, while increasing and diversifying agricultural production.

4.2. Assessment of Humanitarian Needs for Food Security and Nutrition, Livestock and Agriculture, and Coordination of Emergency Interventions:

Despite notable efforts to reduce risks, natural and man-made disasters continue to threaten livelihoods. In 2016, such shocks included mass-displacements, either from conflict zones or from bordering countries – particularly from Pakistan – where Afghan refugees are being forced to return, as well as natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods and locust infestation.

The FAO responds to humanitarian emergencies through the coordination of emergency livelihoods and agriculture interventions with the Food Security and Agricultural Cluster (FSAC) based at the FAO Representation. FSAC ensures that food insecurity is assessed annually through the Seasonal Food Security Analysis (SFSA), and the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

4.3. Delivery of Emergency Responses for Farming and Livelihoods Support:

In 2016, the FAO provided emergency agricultural inputs to rebuild livelihoods in the most food insecure provinces of the country identified by the SFSA. In 2017, the cluster will protect and promote the resumption of agriculture and livestock based livelihoods for a million household victims of conflict and natural disasters, including IDPs, refugees, and severely food insecure farming families through the provision of farming kits for crop planting and livestock feeding.

Implementation, monitoring and reporting arrangements

1. The total budget for CPF (2017-2021) is estimated around USD 151,430,500 of which USD 36,614,000 is committed. One of the biggest challenges to FAO is that there is highly probable that donor funding will reduce over time, as well as changing their funding modality (i.e. on-budget) and this may affect FAO’s resource mobilization and implementation strategy. The shortfall (funding gap) will be raised when funding for Afghanistan is proves to be more available. For instance, there are global funding opportunities for Afghanistan Green Climate Fund (GCF), Green Environment Facility (GEF) and donor; Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), the United States Agency for International Developments (USAID), the Government of Japan, the Government of Germany, the Government of Luxembourg, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), UN CERF and FAO’s TCP.
2. The CPF will be pursued in partnerships as broad as possible and in alignment with the joint efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to meet their priorities. GoIRA and FAO look forward to seeking collaboration and support from all concerned resource partners for the successful implementation of the CPF.
3. MAIL will have the main role to ensure that activities in the agriculture, irrigation and livestock sectors are coordinated, however MEW will also play a prominent role and support in water and irrigation parts that the CPF is delivered effectively and efficiently.
4. FAO will take the lead in ensuring that the activities within the CPF are implemented as agreed. A steering group led by MAIL and FAO will meet periodically to review the progress of the CPF. In addition, *ad-hoc* committees or meetings can be convened on request by members of the steering group to examine specific aspects of the CPF and its implementation, or if significant changes to the CPF are required as issues emerge.
5. The CPF (2017 – 2021) defines the development objectives for collaboration between FAO and the Government in support of the achievement of the priorities of the Government.
6. Through the co-signature of the CPF (2017 – 2021), the Government and FAO commit to continue the fruitful collaboration to achieve the objectives stated in the document, subject to the availability of necessary financial and human resources.

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Annexes:

- Annex 1: CPF Results and Resource Requirements for 2017 to 2021
- Annex 2: UN System Linkages
- Annex 3: Indicative TCP Pipeline

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