



联 合 国
粮 食 及
农 业 组 织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الأغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

Thirty-second Session

Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 5-7 May 2020

Web Annex

Solutions for Youth, Employment and Developing Rural Areas in relation to the United Nations Decade of Family Farming

Executive Summary

This Web Annex accompanies the background paper that has been prepared in response to Agenda Item 10 (Solutions for youth, employment and developing rural areas in relation to the United Nations Decade of Family Farming) of the Thirty-second Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC). It provides additional contextual information on the United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 (UNDFF), quantitative data on poverty and youth in Europe and Central Asia, and an overview description of the three strategic development pathways for smallholders and family farms.

Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:

ERC Secretariat

ERC-ECA-Secretariat@fao.org

1. UNDFF and the Sustainable Development Goals

The vision of the UNDFF is: “A world where diverse, healthy and sustainable food and agricultural systems flourish, where resilient rural and urban communities enjoy a high quality of life in dignity, equity, free from hunger and poverty.”

The UNDFF builds on the success of the International Year of Family Farming of 2014. The global launch of the UNDFF, co-organized by FAO and the International Fund For Agricultural Development (IFAD), took place on 29 May 2019 at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy, where a Global Action Plan (GAP) for the UNDFF was also presented. The GAP aims at accelerating actions undertaken in a collective, coherent and comprehensive manner to support family farmers, who are key agents of sustainable development. The GAP includes seven pillars of work:

- **Pillar 1:** *Develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming*
- **Pillar 2:** *Support youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming*
- **Pillar 3:** *Promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women*
- **Pillar 4:** *Strengthen family farmers' organizations and their capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers and provide inclusive services in the urban-rural continuum*
- **Pillar 5:** *Improve socio-economic inclusion, resilience and well-being of family farmers, rural households and communities*
- **Pillar 6:** *Promote sustainability of family farming for climate-resilient food systems*
- **Pillar 7:** *Strengthen the multidimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations contributing to territorial development and food systems that safeguard biodiversity, environment and culture*

As mentioned above, Pillar 2 of the GAP as a transversal area of work aims to support youth, including ensuring the generational sustainability of family farming through enabling access to land, information, education, infrastructure and financial services, markets and policy-making processes relating to farming. Providing attractive alternatives in rural areas for rural youth, on farms and in rural communities, is a main precondition for keeping agriculture viable and sustainable.

The United Nations Resolution proclaiming 2019-2028 the UNDFF calls upon FAO and IFAD to lead the implementation of the UNDFF. At both global and regional levels, the UNDFF provides an extraordinary opportunity for the United Nations to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals. In Europe and Central Asia, the UNDFF provides an excellent opportunity for FAO to further enhance its support to smallholders and family farms. Support for small farms is one of four priorities of FAO in the region.

2. Data sets

Data are shown for the incidence of poverty and for youth populations and employment in selected countries of Europe and Central Asia.

Table 1: Population, poverty headcounts (%), number of the poor and trends in the eight countries covered by FAO smallholder studies

Country (year)	Population, millions	Poverty headcount, %	Number of the poor*	Trend
Albania (2012)	2.9	14.3	415 000	Increasing after years of decrease
Armenia (2015)	2.9	29.8	870 000	Decreasing
Georgia (2016)	3.7	21.3	792 000	Decreasing, but at a slowing rate
Kyrgyzstan (2015)	6.1	25.4	1 550 000	Decreasing
Republic of Moldova (2015)	3.6	9.6	341 000	Decreasing
North Macedonia (2014)	2.1	22.1	459 000	Decreasing
Serbia (2016)	7.1	25.7	1 775 000	Decreasing
Tajikistan (2015)	8.7	31.3	3 000 000	Stable

Source: World Bank data cited by FAO (2020).

* According to the national poverty line.

Table 2: Youth population and unemployment statistics from selected countries in Europe and Central Asia

Country	Youth (15-24) population (% of total population)	Youth unemployment (% of youth labour force)	Male youth unemployment (% of youth labour force)	Female youth unemployment (% of youth labour force)
Albania	15.5 (2019)	31.9 (2017)	34.1 (2017)	27.7 (2017)
Armenia	11.8 (2019)	38.2 (2017)	32.8 (2017)	44.8 (2017)
Azerbaijan	14.1 (2019)	12.8 (2018)	11.1 (2018)	14.7 (2018)
Belarus	10.0 (2019)	10.7 (2018)	12.7 (2018)	8.4 (2018)
Georgia	11.4 (2019)	29.9 (2018)	26.7 (2018)	35.3 (2018)
Kyrgyzstan	16.2 (2019)	14.2 (2018)	10.1 (2018)	22.3 (2018)
Republic of Moldova	13.1 (2017)	7.4 (2018)	7.5 (2018)	7.2 (2018)
Montenegro	13.0 (2019)	29.4 (2018)	33.3 (2018)	23.6 (2018)
North Macedonia	12.4 (2019)	45.4 (2018)	46.6 (2018)	43.2 (2018)
Russian Federation	10.4 (2018)	17.0 (2018)	16.2 (2018)	17.9 (2018)
Serbia	10.6 (2019)	29.7 (2018)	28.3 (2018)	32.0 (2018)
Turkey	15.8 (2019)	20.2 (2018)	17.6 (2018)	25.0 (2018)
Ukraine	9.6 (2019)	18.0 (2018)	16.9 (2018)	19.3 (2018)
Uzbekistan	16.7 (2019)	n/a	n/a	n/a
EU-28	10.7 (2019)	15.2 (2018)	15.8 (2018)	14.6 (2018)
Norway	12.4 (2019)	9.7 (2018)	10.7 (2018)	8.6 (2018)
Switzerland	10.7 (2019)	8.0 (2018)	8.4 (2018)	7.5 (2018)

Sources: Eurostat, national statistical agencies for population data and ILOSTAT Country Profiles for unemployment data, Eurostat for unemployment data in EU-28.

3. Strategic development pathways for smallholders and family farms

The small farms do not constitute one homogeneous group, and three contrasting strategic development pathways have been identified based on FAO country studies of the needs and constraints of smallholders and family farms in eight countries in the region (FAO, 2020). The three identified pathways are:

- Development of commercial family farms: *the agricultural path*.
- Diversification of the rural economy with the aim of creating new jobs in rural areas that are not directly in primary agricultural production: *the diversification path*.
- Provide decent alternatives to those who wish to remain in rural areas in other economic activities while protecting those vulnerable groups with few (if any) options, with the objective of leaving no one behind: *the exit path*.

In reality, many households and small farms have mixed livelihood strategies. This means that the household has different sources of income, e.g. from farming in combination with off-farm activities and/or from wage labour. Households and farms in the different pathways have different needs for support, which should be carefully considered when designing policy and support measures.

The agricultural path

Farmers choosing the agricultural path will formalize their businesses as commercial family farms that are producing substantially for the market and are fully integrated into market structures. Structural development of the commercially oriented part of the family farms will make it feasible to consider their developing into commercial family farms through investing in mechanization and new technologies and in fulfilling standards. Innovation is a key enabler of the sustainable intensification process. When following the agricultural path, a well-functioning agricultural land market, both for lease and sale, is decisive for the necessary structural development towards larger and less fragmented farms. The need to innovate to generate sufficient income from larger and more consolidated land parcels, reduce production costs and improve the quality of products is necessary to become competitive and to be able to sell to buyers on local or international markets. Young farmers, both women and men, are most likely to have the energy and vision necessary to pursue the agricultural path.

The diversification path

Many smallholders and family farms will have neither the agricultural and economic potential nor the personal interest to develop into commercially oriented family farms. This large group of rural dwellers follows another livelihood strategy reliant on decreasing dependence on agriculture: the diversification path. This path includes on-farm diversification and value chain integration as well as off-farm activities in sectors other than primary agricultural production. This may be on-farm processing, rural tourism and agritourism, rural crafts, services or other gainful, entrepreneurial activities. Alternatively, members of the farm household may seek alternative jobs outside the agricultural sector, for example in services or other production sectors. This strategy has a particular relevance to rural youth and women. A wider variety of employment opportunities would provide youth with an opportunity and incentive to stay in rural areas and curb their need to migrate to urban areas or farther. Agritourism and rural tourism have, especially in areas with rich natural and cultural heritage, particularly good potential, as more and more people are demanding natural products and would even pay extra to support the creation of such products that they will eventually consume, such as cheese, meat, olive oil or wine. Integrated community development can be an option for supporting the rural dwellers pursuing the diversification path.

The exit path

The third livelihood strategy will be, for many smallholders and family farmers, to leave agriculture. Some of these may need to rely on social support for basic necessities, while others will develop alternative livelihood strategies, including migration. Elderly farmers in particular may need to rely on social assistance when their farms have not developed and their children will not continue small-scale farming. They will have no chances in the agricultural path and will find it difficult to follow the diversification path. Thus, exit from agriculture will be their preferred option and is a consequence of structural changes. Early retirement support measures can support older farmers and household owners wanting to leave production and retire. This can make their land available for younger farmers and for farmers with better preconditions to pursue the commercial agricultural path.

4. References

- Committee on World Food Security (CFS).** 2014. *Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems.* <http://www.fao.org/3/a-au866e.pdf>
- European Commission (EC).** 2013. *Summary of proceedings. Conference on Family Farming: A dialogue towards more sustainable and resilient farming in Europe and the world.* Bucharest, Romania.
- European Parliament (EP).** 2010. *How to Promote the Role of Youth in Rural Areas of Europe?* Brussels, European Parliament.
- European Parliament (EP).** 2017. *Research for AGRI Committee - Young farmers - Policy implementation after the 2013 CAP reform.* Brussels, European Parliament.
- European Network for Regional Development (ENRD).** 2019. *The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Youth and generational renewal.* Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union. https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/enrd_publications/projects-brochure_08_youth_en_web.pdf
- Eurostat.** 2018. *Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics: 2018 edition.* Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/9455154/KS-FK-18-001-EN-N.pdf>
- FAO.** 2014a. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2014: Innovation in family farming.* Rome, FAO. 161 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4040e.pdf>).
- FAO.** 2014b. *Building a common vision for sustainable food and agriculture: Principles and approaches.* Rome, FAO. 56 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3940e.pdf>).
- FAO.** 2015. *e-Agriculture 10 Year Review Report: Implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Action Line C7. ICT Applications: e-agriculture.* Rome, FAO. 82 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4605e.pdf>).
- FAO.** 2016. *Rural communication services for family farming: Contributions, evidence and perspectives.* Results of the Forum on Communication for Development and Community Media for Family Farming (FCCM) held in Rome, Italy, 23-24 October 2014. Rome, FAO. 65 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6059e.pdf>).
- FAO.** 2018a. *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia 2018: The role of migration, rural women and youth in sustainable development.* Budapest, FAO. 110 pp. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/CA2703EN/CA2703EN.pdf>).
- FAO.** 2018b. *E-agriculture: the Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for the Development of Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems and Trade Integration.* Thirty-first Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16–18 May 2018. ERC/18/3. <http://www.fao.org/3/MW106EN/mw106en.pdf>
- FAO.** 2019. *Regional Gender Equality and Action Plan for Europe and Central Asia 2019–2022.* Budapest, FAO. 100 pp. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca4521en/ca4521en.pdf>).
- FAO.** Forthcoming. *Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms in Europe and Central Asia. Regional Synthesis Report based on country studies in eight countries.*

- FAO & International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).** 2019. *United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028. Global Action Plan.* Rome, FAO & IFAD. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca4672en/ca4672en.pdf>
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).** 2019. *Investing in rural youth in the Near East, North Africa, Europe and Central Asia.* IFAD Research Series. https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/41187395/20_Kabbani_2019+RDR+BACKGROUND+PAPER.pdf
- International Labour Organization (ILO).** 2017. *What Future for Decent Work in Europe and Central Asia: Opportunities and Challenges.* Report of the Director General. Tenth European Regional Meeting, Istanbul, 2–5 October 2017. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/-europe/-/-ro-geneva/-/-ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms_577395.pdf
- Jentsch, B. & Shucksmith, M.** 2017. *Young People in Rural Areas of Europe.* Routledge.
- Tudor, M.M.** 2015. Small scale agriculture as a resilient system in rural Romania. *Studies in Agricultural Economics*, 117(1): 27–34. <https://doi.org/10.7896/j.1503>
- United Nations Development Group (UNDG).** 2017. *Building more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies in Europe and Central Asia: From Vision to Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals Call for Action from the Regional UN System.* Regional Advocacy Paper. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2017-Regional-Advocacy-Paper-FINAL-19-June-2017.pdf>
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID).** 2018. *Climate Risk Profile: Central Asia.* https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2018-April-30_USAID_CadmusCISF_Climate-Risk-Profile-Central-Asia.pdf
- Van der Ploeg, J. D.** 2016. *Family farming in Europe and Central Asia: History, characteristics, threats and potentials.* International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) Working Paper No. 153. FAO and UNDP. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6536e.pdf>).
- World Bank (WB) & FAO.** 2014. *Gender Disaggregated Data - Western Balkans. Statistical Reports 2005–2013.* http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/nr/land_tenure/Genders_Report_WB.pdf
- WB.** 2019. *Europe and Central Asia: Macro Poverty Outlook.* New York, World Bank. 50 pp. (also available at <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/107191492012467509/mpo-eca.pdf>).