

## City-to-city cooperation for urban and peri-urban horticulture

**FAO helps developing cities find partners in the developed world to assist in strengthening their UPH sectors**



### Key points

*FAO recognizes the enormous potential of partnerships between cities, regions and other local institutions in developed and developing countries*

*Through its Decentralized Cooperation Programme, FAO reinforces the role of local governments and facilitates their access to international development assistance*

*Some of the most successful decentralized cooperation projects have focused on strengthening urban and peri-urban horticulture*

Creating partnerships for local development is a key part of FAO's work. The FAO Decentralized Cooperation (DC) Programme helps to link local government institutions in developed and developing countries in a range of activities, from improving water conservation in arid rural areas to tree-planting in city centres.

The programme was launched in 2002, when FAO signed an agreement with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mobilize the resources of local governments in Italy in the fight against hunger. Since then, 33 agreements have been signed or are under negotiation with regions and local authorities in Belgium, France, Italy and Spain. The programme promotes direct region-to-region and city-to-city collaboration, with FAO acting as both a catalyst and a provider of external support and technical guidance.

Decentralized partnerships focus on practical activities that improve local food security and

living conditions. Projects are community-oriented, and identified and implemented together with local beneficiaries in sectors consistent with national priorities. The strategy is to connect projects horizontally with other local development activities, and vertically with national programmes. Partners include not only municipal authorities, but civil society organizations, NGOs and the private sector.

Through its DC programme, FAO reinforces the role of local governments and facilitates their access to international development assistance, by:

- advising local authorities on identifying and formulating development projects
- providing projects with technical assistance (and resource administration, if required), and disseminating best practices and lessons learned
- mobilizing funding and other support in developed countries from local communities (including

### Development partnerships

FAO has created partnerships for development between regions and cities from Belgium to Brazil. For example:

**Water management:** The regions of Tuscany and Piedmont in Italy have assisted the Brazilian states of Bahia and Piauí in rainwater harvesting and development of income-generating activities.

**Strengthening local capacities:** The government of Catalonia, Spain, collaborates with rural communities and farmers' organizations in Nicaragua and Guatemala.

**Natural resources:** The region of Flanders, in Belgium, supports small-scale irrigation development and conservation of natural resources in Malawi.

**Rural development:** The French city of Montreuil has linked up with Viet Nam's Hai Duong province to provide assistance to rural communities in the region of Yelimaná in Mali. Activities include soil conservation, water management, rice production, health and education.

government, civil society and private sector) and central governments

Cooperation arrangements vary. FAO may provide advice to projects implemented by partners, or execute project components – such as training – or provide equipment.

### **Rome-Kigali: Alliance for horticulture**

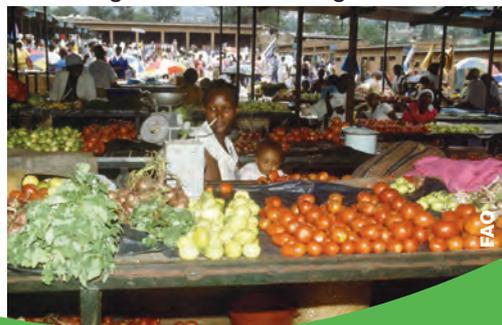
Some of the most successful decentralized cooperation projects have focused on urban and peri-urban horticulture (UPH) in cities facing rapid population growth and rising levels of food insecurity. For example, UPH has become the focus of a project that has linked the cities of Rome and Kigali since 2004. The project was the first to become operational under the Decentralized Cooperation Programme.

With funding of US\$280 000 from the city of Rome and US\$560 000 from the Italian government, the project aimed at improving food security in Kigali's rural and urban areas through marshland reclamation and development of horticulture, animal production and agro-forestry. An Italian company donated US\$26 000 for the purchase of water pumps and the construction of rainwater collection tanks.

Rome City Council provided direct technical support and funded the participation of several Rome-based development NGOs. The project helped train some 340 producers' associations in cooperative principles, micro-gardens technology, plant nursery management and the use of treadle pumps.

After three years, the project was extended to a second phase, focused largely on horticulture.

*A vegetable market in Kigali*



This factsheet was prepared by Paola Castelgrande, of FAO's Decentralized Cooperation Programme



### **UPH improves nutrition, income in Brazil**

A decentralized cooperation project in the city of Teresina, in the Brazilian state of Piauí, provided training in hydroponic micro-gardening to 10 women's groups representing more than 120 families. The project is supported by the universities of Padova and Bologna in Italy, in collaboration with Teresina local authorities and NGOs. The project budget of US\$150 000 was co-funded by the Italian region of Veneto and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The women trained by the project reported improvements in family nutrition and earned an average of US\$30 a month from the sale of produce.

Training and demonstration sites have helped improve the skills of urban households in micro-gardening, water-harvesting, waste recycling and compost production. The project also promotes production of fruit for export. Project activities have been integrated into Kigali's strategic plan for urban and peri-urban agriculture, creating new synergies with other development activities and FAO projects in the city. The strategic plan itself has been incorporated in Kigali's long-term urban development plan.

### **Milan-Dakar: Cooperation on micro-gardens**

Milan City Council's International Affairs Department established a partnership with the Dakar City Council in 2004 – the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the twinning of the two cities – to provide support for an FAO-assisted programme to promote micro-gardens in low-income areas of the Senegalese capital and the neighbouring city of Pikine.

Since then, Milan has contributed some US\$500 000 to the programme, in addition to funding of US\$500 000 from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Technical support is provided by two Italian NGOs and the University of Milan, which created a geographic information system on micro-gardening in Dakar and conducted studies on



*FAO's Director-General, Jacques Diouf, inspects a micro-garden on a rooftop in Dakar*

the socio-economic benefits of the programme.

More than 4 000 urban residents, most of them women, have started micro-gardens, which produce on average 30 kg of vegetables per sqm per year, enough to satisfy family needs and providing a surplus for sale. A new phase of the programme focuses on consolidating lessons learned in the first phase, increasing the number of beneficiaries and disseminating micro-gardens to other African cities.

### **Further information**

*FAO's Decentralized Cooperation Programme:*  
[www.fao.org/tc/DCP/](http://www.fao.org/tc/DCP/)

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