

**Draft Strategy Note**  
**Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management**

**I. Analysis of needs and FAO comparative advantage**

1. Natural resources (soil, water, genetic diversity), climate and ecosystem services are fundamental for the production of food and for the maintenance of agricultural systems and livelihoods. Global forecasts of population growth and economic development indicate that any long-term progress towards the Global Goals of Members will not be possible without the sustainable management (conservation, improvement and sustainable use) of natural resources.
2. Conflicts (within and across national boundaries) over access to and the use of land, soil, water and other natural resources will increase over the next decades. These conflicts will be exacerbated by changing growing conditions, increased water scarcity, extreme weather events and other effects of climate change. Addressing these, includes recognizing the cross-sectoral character of integrated natural resources management at the local scale, and linking local management to the complexity and variety of instruments that address different aspects of the environment at the global scale.
3. Integrated management of natural resources and their economic, environmental and social dimensions, through international instruments and national level support, is required to address these needs. This will necessitate a critical mass of core competencies providing coordination and integration across FAO units and strategic partnerships with other international organizations.
4. FAO has the following comparative advantages:
  - a. A neutral forum for the global governance of environment and natural resources relating to food and agriculture, including through the formulation/negotiation/monitoring of binding and non-binding international instruments (conventions, codes of conduct, standards and guidelines). FAO's neutrality and expertise allow it to guide the development of international instruments so that even before they come into force, they reflect the real needs and interests of its member nations, especially developing countries.
  - b. Unique mix of core competencies covering most aspects of natural resources management, and through integrating frameworks able to involve all relevant Departments in developing multidisciplinary and integrated responses to new challenges, such as climate change, and to food security and the development of the crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry sectors.
  - c. Global assessment, monitoring and data/information generation, often as the sole provider, on the natural resources base (land/soil, water, weather/climate, genetic resources for food and agriculture), based on internationally accepted classifications and standards developed with partners, which underpin both international instruments and country level policy and capacity building support.
  - d. FAO has close institutional links with partners working on the elaboration and implementation of international instruments dealing with access to and management of natural resources and the environment, and is uniquely well placed to advise member nations, especially developing countries, on implementation at country level.
  - e. Extensive policy experience in developing countries, and contacts with partner organizations and institutes, feeding into policy and capacity building support on key challenges including through its network of field offices at country level.

## II. Vision and Strategic Objectives

5. FAO will be positioned as the main source of data, knowledge and support for policy and strategy to ensure the sustained use of the natural resource base for food and agriculture. FAO will contribute to maximizing the long-term economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits from sustainable and integrated management of the natural resource base, satisfying the increasing demands for food, fibre, fuel, environmental services and livelihoods for the poor, and meeting the challenges of climate change through appropriate adaptation and mitigation.
6. FAO is to pursue the following objectives:
  - a. International and national decision-making about integrated natural resources management for food and agriculture is based on accurate and timely information, lessons learned in the areas of policy and capacity building, recognition of the cross-sectoral character of natural resources management at the local scale, and reconciliation of trade-offs across different natural resources and their economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.
  - b. Coherent management of food, agriculture, fisheries, forestry and the environment has been achieved through better cooperation at international and national levels, translating international agreements into action on the ground, and seeking to harmonize global and local objectives. Indicators could include: reduced land degradation; improved land use planning; soil fertility and productivity; improved security of tenure and access; increased water use efficiency and managed scarcity; sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity; resilience to climatic variability; increased carbon sequestration.
  - c. New challenges such as climate change, demand for bioenergy and the need to balance these with food security have been addressed through integrated management (conservation, improvement and sustainable utilization) of land/soil, water, genetic resources, including the interfaces with forests and fisheries (e.g. ecosystem approaches).

## III. Expected Outcomes

7. International instruments guide, support and properly reflect the sustainable management of natural resources for food and agriculture in the member countries, leading to reduced incompatibilities and conflicts between objectives as defined by different sectors, levels of government and countries, and improved responses to climate change.
8. Member countries have the capacity for and are investing in:
  - a. assessing, monitoring and reporting of their natural resource base (land, water, climate, genetic resources)
  - b. developing gender-sensitive integrated multi-sectoral policies and strategies towards reducing conflicts amongst sectors and sustainable use of and access to natural resources for food security and for the maintenance of agricultural systems and livelihoods
  - c. meeting their obligations under international instruments, and making necessary institutional and policy changes to derive the most benefit from these instruments
  - d. responding to the challenges of climate change, including the development and implementation of adaptation plans and improved mitigation practices.

## IV. Implementation features

9. Integrated management of natural resources requires a critical mass of core competencies able to coordinate and integrate the relevant knowledge available across the Organization. This will include:

- a. defining and implementing multi-year frameworks for each of the key natural resources, in close consultation with the member countries, as illustrated by the Multi-year Programme of Work of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (covering crops, livestock, forestry and fisheries genetic resources) and the proposed Programmatic Framework for Water (COAG/2007/7). This is to coordinate and work across the relevant departments of the Organization and to develop extra-budgetary programmes with national level support in key cross-cutting areas;
- b. identifying focal units for each existing and proposed international instrument relevant to the environment and natural resources, charged with coordinating and integrating FAO's inputs into the development and implementation of these instruments; building strategic partnerships with UN agencies and other relevant institutions to support international governance of multi-dimensional environment and natural resources management issues, including climate change in the post-Kyoto process and beyond; and analysing the implications of these international agreements on food and agriculture;
- c. ensuring, in close collaboration with partners and member countries, the availability, management, and accessibility of global data, including the appropriate use of remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) for spatial data sets;
- d. productive partnerships with relevant institutions (e.g. UN agencies, CGIAR, NGO's, Universities, private sector) involved in natural resources management and the environment;
- e. effective use of such data for the formulation of policies, strategies and global perspective studies, including the UN World Water Development Report, the reports on the state of the world's genetic resources, agro-ecological zoning, global assessment of soil degradation, etc.