

**Draft Strategy Note  
FAO's Policy Work  
(Assistance to Policy and Strategy and  
Economic, Social and Food and Nutrition Policy)**

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

1. Country policies and their implementation have a fundamental impact on the achievement of the Global Goals of Members. Policy options, provided through advisory services, need to be underpinned by analytical work on the impact of agricultural, rural development and environmental policies on poverty and food security, and on the relationship between agriculture, hunger and poverty. In this area, FAO must necessarily focus its limited resources where it can demonstrate results in areas of comparative advantage. A strategic point of entry is to influence policies and the strategies according to which resources from other sources (governments and their development partners) are being used. FAO's fundamental role in policy assistance is evidenced by the strong demand of its Membership. Trends already at work suggest for the future an increasingly knowledge intensive policy assistance based on a stronger policy dialogue and the facilitation of policy processes.

2. FAO's unique characteristics give it comparative advantages in the area of policy and strategy:

- a. The main global forum and venue for negotiating global policy frameworks related to agriculture<sup>1</sup>, rural development, food security and nutrition.
- b. Potential for multidisciplinary policy work on priority policy themes of a complex nature, such as hunger and malnutrition, high food prices, transboundary risks, climate change and energy, given the unique mix of technical, economic and social skills of its staff.
- c. Prominent advocacy role for agricultural development, food security and nutrition through the convening of Summits and Conferences, and the development of flagship publications.
- d. Potential to draw from country and regional policy experiences because of its network of regional, subregional and country offices and its direct access and cooperation with regional organizations and governments.
- e. An image of independence and neutrality, and a consultative working style that puts it in an ideal position of playing the role of an honest broker capable to support complex policy processes by producing evidence based on sound analytical work.

**II. Overall vision and strategic objectives**

3. Vision: FAO will be the main source of independent and evidence-based policy and strategy advice in the area of agriculture, rural development, food security, nutrition and natural resources management. It will be the natural first point of contact for Members and the focal point of donor support for policy and strategy development assistance in the areas of its mandate.

4. Strategic Objectives:

- a. International policy frameworks in place for agriculture, rural development, food security and nutrition which address in an integrated way emerging challenges faced by Member countries.
- b. Sound integrated national policies and strategies adopted that address the complex challenges faced by Members in achieving their goals in the domain of agriculture, rural development, food security, nutrition and natural resources management, and are consistent with international policy frameworks.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document agriculture is taken in its broad sense and includes crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry.

### **III. Expected main outcomes**

5. The main outcomes of this strategy are as follows:
  - a. International community better equipped to develop and agree on policy frameworks for agriculture, rural development, food security, nutrition and natural resources management from improved facilitation of multi-stakeholder policy processes, more timely information from multidisciplinary analytical studies on priority policy themes and better sharing of lesson learned.
  - b. Enhanced capacity of Regional Organizations derived from country policy reviews and regional diagnostic studies to address all the dimensions of the challenges they face in the area of agriculture, rural development, food security, nutrition and natural resources management, and for managing complex processes leading to common regional policies and strategies, and/or better adapted and harmonized national policies and strategies.
  - c. Enhanced Member country capacity and knowledge (grounded in part on other countries' experiences and specific analytical work) to take their policy and strategy decisions and improved linkages of these decisions with investment formulation and budgetary processes.
  - d. Better Government policy and strategy decisions based on consultations with key stakeholders.

### **IV. Implementation features**

6. A critical mass of highly qualified policy oriented staff in FAO and a substantial amount of non-staff resources are needed to produce the various outputs required for FAO to become the main effective source of policy advice in its mandated areas (e.g. global analytical studies, regional diagnostic studies and country policy reviews, policy intelligence and preparedness, two-way linkages between norm setting work conducted at headquarters and assistance provided particularly at decentralized levels). This will require mobilization of resources, such as through a multidonor partnership programme to ensure the flexibility and responsiveness indispensable for effective policy and strategy assistance.
7. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the issues addressed, a specific mechanism will be needed for coordinating and integrating FAO's policy and strategy work including creating multidisciplinary teams that will work on priority policy themes. At country level, FAO's work in policy and strategy development will need to be closely linked to its investment formulation activities and be conducted in partnership with other organizations, capitalizing on comparative advantages of partners, particularly, but not exclusively within the UN System.
8. There will also be a need to strengthen the policy and strategy capacity of decentralized offices, particularly Country Offices as they constitute the main channel of policy dialogue with Member countries. Training and reinforcement of the staff in those offices, and the setting-up of support mechanisms from headquarters, regional, and subregional offices are some of the ways in which this capacity can be reinforced.
9. FAO's policy work at all levels will also rely on key partnerships with other important actors in this field such as the World Bank, IFPRI and national academic institutions to more fully capitalize on existing networks to provide the knowledge intensive policy assistance demanded by Member countries.