



The main area of attention for FAO is to provide policy and technical advice, focusing on institutional adaptation and broader stakeholder participation in the framework of national forest programmes. Capacity building, networking and provision of services for forest resources assessments are also important components of FAO support.

Investment in Agriculture and Rural Development

The transition and reform process in various countries of the sub-region requires the adequate analysis and formulation of agricultural, natural resources and rural investments for national and external financing, as well as the delivery of capacity building to national governments in the field of agricultural and rural investments' planning and design.

In this respect, FAO contributes to programmes and projects co-funded by international financing institutions (IFIs); the review and development of agricultural and rural development policies; the formulation of national programmes for food security and agricultural/rural development; the preparation of sector/sub-sector strategies; and identifying appropriate policies, programmes and projects as a basis for dialogue between governments and financing institutions.

Land and Water

Most of the sub-region suffers from physical water scarcity and requires appropriate management of water resources. Soil degradation has also been a growing concern commonly associated with lack of proper drainage in irrigated areas as well as overgrazing and erosion in rain-fed areas. The current status of land and water resources in the Aral Sea basin is a

case in point. Water rights and land tenure issues have yet to become a driver for agricultural development in most countries of the sub-region.

In the land and water sector, FAO continues to update and strengthen information systems on land and water and to provide policy advice and capacity building to improve mechanisms for collaboration in the management of transboundary water resources, the modernisation of the irrigation sub-sector, and addressing issues of water rights, land tenure and soil salinity prevention and remediation.

Links between the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia and the UN system

Emphasis is made on FAO's active participation in country-level inter-agency programming exercises. Country priorities for FAO intervention, as agreed on with governments, include technical assistance to the formulation of National Medium Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPFs) in direct consultation with the countries' ministries of agriculture, other line ministries and concerned stakeholders. Technical support is also provided for the formulation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), Common Country Assessments (CCAs), and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and similar development assistance frameworks that give due consideration to the role of agriculture and food security.

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FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia – SEC



Weaving knowledge
into development



FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia – SEC

The FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (SEC) located in Ankara, Turkey was established following the signature of the Host Country Agreement between the Turkish Government and FAO in August 2006.



The Office has been established to improve delivery of FAO's expertise and services at the country and sub-regional levels with the aim of assisting member countries to attain their food security objectives and the Millennium Development Goals.

The countries covered by the FAO/SEC Sub-regional Office are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The Office's technical capacity is organized in a multidisciplinary team (MDT) of technical officers with expertise in:

- Animal Production and Health
- Crop Production and Protection
- Fisheries
- Food and Agriculture Policy
- Forestry
- Investments in Agriculture and Rural Development
- Land and Water

The multidisciplinary team is accompanied by junior Turkish professional officers on a two-year rotating basis.

Thanks to its multidisciplinary team, the FAO/SEC Office can better respond to the priority needs of countries of the sub-region, improve its contribution to the work of United Nations Country Teams, and support sub-regional collaboration to address common food security, agriculture and rural development issues.

The operations of the Office are supported by the Turkish Government, which provides office facilities, equipment and maintenance, as well as partnership/Trust Fund arrangements to develop and support field programmes and projects in the sub-region.

Most countries of the sub-region are currently in transition from planned to market economies and are in the process of reforming their institutions. In general, they have a great potential for agricultural sector development to enhance food security objectives.

The emphasis of the FAO/SEC Office action is placed on competent analysis of and advice on policy reform concerning agriculture, land tenure and natural resources. FAO further provides these countries with technical assistance services in institution building, knowledge and competencies development, and training and experience exchange among other countries in overcoming the challenges of transition.

Main functions of the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia

- Provision of technical assistance at national and sub-regional level
- Advice on the formulation of sub-regional and national policies and strategies
- Coordination and implementation of FAO's national and sub-regional programmes and projects
- Servicing sub-regional commissions and liaison with sub-regional organizations



- Promotion of and support to inter-country collaborative activities and networking
- Exchange of information, documentation, publications and studies

The fields of expertise

FAO's multidisciplinary team is available to provide services in the following fields:

Animal Production and Health

In Central Asia, the vast majority of livestock production is still done at the household level. Sheep, goats, poultry and dairy animals make a substantial contribution to household food security by providing food, income, energy and fertilizers. Nevertheless, small-scale livestock producers are often constrained by poor access to markets and the presence of diseases that may result in productivity well below the potential.

Through the Office, Central Asian countries are assisted in developing and implementing programmes to improve the

income of small-scale producers and in developing appropriate preventive and response mechanisms (early warning, early detection and early response) to the threats posed by transboundary animal diseases.

Crop Production and Protection Systems Management

Countries of the Central Asia sub-region are making efforts to overcome the challenges to achieving national food security in strategic crops. The agricultural potential varies widely across countries, but the regions' resource base is generally under stress due to major constraints such as low rainfall, scarcity of arable land, fragmented landholdings and serious degradation of natural resources caused by soil erosion, salinity, overgrazing and desertification, all of which undermine agriculture growth and sustainable food production.

FAO's support is geared towards reviewing and closely analyzing the situation of major crops in the region and producing practical recommendations and information that may help to raise their sustainable production and protection. It also provides technical advice, capacity building and training.

Fisheries

Main areas of attention for FAO are the ecological crisis in the Aral Sea; commercial overfishing of sturgeon from the Caspian Sea; illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in inland waters; the decreased capacity of national fisheries authorities to support management and development of the sector; and the recovering demand for fish from fisheries and for aquaculture among consumers in the sub-region.

The core of the FAO fisheries programme for the sub-region is to provide advice to and building capacity amongst governments, fishers and aquaculturists in support of better management and responsible development of the sector.

Food and Agriculture Policy

Policy assistance to member countries is focused on developing National Medium Term Priority Frameworks (NMTPFs) for member countries in direct consultation with all stakeholders. Within this framework, special attention is given to issues relating to the sustainable use of water and natural resources and trade.

In countries emerging from natural and man-made disasters, support is directed to the establishment of appropriate institutional and policy frameworks for the rehabilitation and enhancement of the agriculture and rural sector. Countries are supported in adjusting their development strategies and policy frameworks at the national and sub-regional levels.

Forestry

Central Asia is one of the world's least-forested regions. With the exception of Turkey and Azerbaijan, forest cover is significantly less than 10%. In all countries, the forests are still fully owned and managed by state agencies. Despite their limited areas, forests and woodlands provide important environmental services, such as the protection of watersheds and control of land degradation and desertification processes. Wood fuel remains an important source of energy for rural people, and non-wood forest products (especially nuts) are a significant source of food and income.

