



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



# REGIONAL INITIATIVES

FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

# FAO INITIATIVES FOR A REGION WITH UNIQUE CHALLENGES

The Europe and Central Asia region is unique in many ways.

Its vast land area is home to more than 50 countries, and includes a wide variety of topographies, climates and growing conditions.

The region's vibrant agricultural and food systems face important challenges. Beyond structural issues such as farm size and efficiency, there is need to improve sustainability – in order to maintain the sector's potential and increase resilience in the face of natural hazards due to climate change.

Food security in the region is generally good, but different forms of malnutrition persist: stunted growth in children, micronutrient deficiencies, and growing obesity.



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To be of maximum service in this exciting and challenging part of the world and support its members in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), FAO is driving forward Global Strategic Programmes and spearheading three Regional Initiatives especially for Europe and Central Asia:

1. Empowering smallholders and family farms for improved rural livelihoods and poverty reduction
2. Improving agrifood trade and market integration
3. Sustainable natural resource management under a changing climate.

These three Regional Initiatives provide an integrated, programmatic approach to addressing the region's priority issues, and guide the implementation of country programmes. Most of FAO's work in the region contributes to one or more of these Initiatives, with food and nutrition security as a cross-cutting area of work.

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# REGIONAL INITIATIVE 1 FOR SMALLHOLDERS AND FAMILY FARMS



Addressing the problems of rural people by empowering smallholders and family farms to improve their livelihoods is the main objective of this Initiative.

The basic principles are: elimination of rural poverty, improving the resilience of rural populations and especially smallholders, and inclusive growth for rural economies based on sustainable use of natural resources.

The work focuses equally on technical issues such as plant and animal health and production, and on social, economic and environmental aspects. Inclusiveness with respect to gender and vulnerable groups is fundamental.

The main two components of the Initiative support the policy, institutions and governance level, while also working with farms, agro-processors, and communities.

Priority actions include strengthening governance and policies, building capacities, enhancing participatory approaches, supporting smallholders in sustainable production technologies, supporting land consolidation processes, income diversification, and improving smallholder access to markets, rural finance and value chains.



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**THE INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTES TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE  
– AND OTHER – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:**



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# REGIONAL INITIATIVE 2 FOR FLOURISHING AGRIFOOD TRADE AND MARKET INTEGRATION

The primary goal of this Initiative is to support member countries in enhancing the agrifood trade policy environment for small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises, with a view to developing more inclusive and efficient agrifood systems.

A better trade policy environment for modern agrifood markets requires the development of capacity for trade agreements, as well as domestic, regional and international food safety and quality standards.

This Initiative has three main components: trade agreements, global standards, and support to domestic markets and export diversification. The Initiative works both at the policy and the enterprise level.

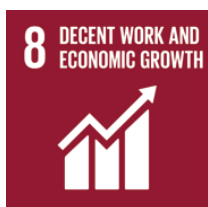


Priority actions include strengthening national agrifood systems, building capacities on trade agreements and food safety and quality standards, enhancing networks for dialogue, addressing plant and animal health issues, strengthening regional biosafety networks and supporting sustainable value chain development, geographical indications and food loss and waste reduction.



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**THE INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTES TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE  
– AND OTHER – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:**



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# REGIONAL INITIATIVE 3

## FOR SUSTAINABLE, CLIMATE-RESILIENT NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The objective of this Regional Initiative is to strengthen countries' ability to manage their natural resources sustainably, while also coping with climate change and reducing the risk of disaster in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

As countries work to transition to more climate-resilient, sustainable agriculture and food systems, FAO supports their efforts by implementing targeted projects, and by helping countries access environmental climate finance from sources such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The Initiative works through three main components: improved policy alignment, cooperation and coordination; provision and collection of data, tools and services for decision making; and capacity development.



Priority actions include promoting sustainable use of natural resources, disaster risk reduction and crisis management policies, strengthening capacities in agriculture statistics, improving agro-meteorology services and early warning systems.



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THE INITIATIVE CONTRIBUTES TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE – AND OTHER – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:



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# COMPLEMENTARITY

## REGIONAL INITIATIVE 1

Formulation of effective policies for sustainable inclusive growth for farmers

## REGIONAL INITIATIVE 2

Enhancing the reach towards new markets through alignment of trade

## REGIONAL INITIATIVE 3

Sustainable natural resource management

## Cross-cutting area of work

Addressing food insecurity and reduction of all forms of malnutrition

FAO's three Regional Initiatives for Europe and Central Asia address interlinked issues to ensure the contribution of agriculture to achieve the universality of the Sustainable Development Goals. For this reason, technical teams in the region and at FAO headquarters work in close collaboration to support countries in achieving their goals.

Regional Initiatives 1 and 2 work closely on promoting more inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems – including improved nutrition, reduction of food losses and waste at small-scale producer level, and income generation for poor rural producers.

Initiatives 1 and 3 complement each other on ensuring that smallholders and family farmers share equitably in the benefits of improved productivity and resilience.

Initiatives 2 and 3 work together on creating a policy environment that enables sustainable production and pasture management, on developing investment programmes for Climate-Smart Agriculture, on organic farming, and on reducing food losses and waste.

Food and nutrition security, gender mainstreaming, governance, and climate change are important cross-cutting issues. In these and other areas, all three Regional Initiatives come into play.

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REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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