



# Afghanistan and FAO

## *Partnering for food security through gender equality*

Afghanistan has a long history of technical cooperation with the Organization. Today the Afghanistan country programme is one of FAO's largest in the Asia and Pacific region. Ongoing projects cover household food and livelihood security; animal health and transboundary diseases; small-scale integrated dairy schemes; irrigation rehabilitation and water management; value chain development; soil mapping and national agriculture ecological zoning; and development of research policy and strategy. In addition to developing a five-year strategic plan for the Afghanistan's Independent Land Authority, FAO has also recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF, WFP and the Office of the Chief Executive of Afghanistan for supporting the implementation of the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda. A road map for the localization of SDGs related to agriculture and natural resource management has also been developed.

### **A success in melon fly control**

Melon is a major economic crop in Afghanistan. However, infestation of melon fly is an important impediment to melon production in the country. An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) project in 2011 led to extensive research on various control measures in the Faryab and Mazar provinces, and bagging was identified as the most cost-effective solution to the problem. The project introduced bagging to most of the melon-producing communities in the North and North Eastern regions of the country through Farmer Field Schools (FFS), where farmers were trained when and how the bags should be used. A bag costs only 5 Afghani (AFN), if made at home, and lasts for three to five years. Four or five labourers can bag from an acre of land. In addition to protecting from infestation, bagging increases the colour of the melon, making it more attractive to consumers. This added value has become the primary motivation for farmers to use bags for controlling melon fly more successfully. As a result, there has not been any major outbreak of melon fly reported in the country in the past six years.

*Project: Promoting Integrated Pest Management in Afghanistan. Project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), (US\$7.8 million, 2010-2015)*

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### **Matching FAO's expertise to Afghanistan's development priorities**

FAO assistance in Afghanistan is shaped by the 2017-2021 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which is centred on four priority areas.

- **Better governance through improved capacity** for policy planning, land reform, decentralization, and management of common natural resources
- **Fostering expansion of irrigation and field water management**
- **Intensive agriculture for surplus commercialization**, value chain development, and job creation
- **Supporting vulnerable farmers** for improved food and nutrition security, resilience, and emergency response to natural and human-caused disasters as well as climate change

Jointly developed with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and other partners, the CPF reflects relevant priorities in key national development policies, including the **Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock National Comprehensive Agriculture Development Priority Programme 2016-2020**.

The CPF is fully aligned with the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The President of Afghanistan has underlined the importance of integrating the UN activities using the harmonized One-UN approach.

## Afghanistan National Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSeN)

Afghanistan has a high level of food insecurity. Large segments of the population suffer from hunger and malnutrition resulting from the structural constraints and policy challenges faced by the country. Food-related challenges caused by disasters affect large segments of the population.

Recognizing that food security and better nutrition are crucial

*"Empowering women farmers is key to developing sustainable rural livelihoods and contributes to ensuring food security."*

FAO Director-General

for national development and stability, in 2017, the Government launched the Afghanistan Food Security and Nutrition Agenda (AFSeN) to put an end to hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. The Agenda was developed with technical support

from FAO and WFP. The goal is to ensure that no Afghan suffers from hunger and every Afghan is well-nourished.

In order to track progress in implementation of the Agenda, a High-Level Food Security and Nutrition Steering Committee (the FSNSC) and National Technical Secretariat have been established. The Committee is chaired by the Chief Executive, while ten ministries including two other governmental agencies are key members. In order to establish, operationalize and enable the Secretariat, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Office of the Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and three UN agencies (FAO, UNICEF, and WFP). The three UN agencies are committed to providing technical and financial support to the Secretariat for the next two years.

## Tackling transboundary animal diseases

FAO-Afghanistan has initiated, organized and supported bilateral meetings and workshops for Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) and technical staff in Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan. During the workshops, the participants exchanged information and discussed the possibility of implementing concerted actions, especially for the cross-border areas where informal movement of animals between countries is a common issue.

These meetings served to: (i) discuss the situation of current Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), *Peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) and other transboundary animal diseases (TADs); (ii) promote control and preventive measures currently in place and routine control measures in case of outbreaks (biosecurity, restriction, quarantine, sampling); (iii) discuss veterinary public health with specific reference to food safety; (iv) share information and promote bilateral cooperation in veterinary field; (v) discuss and concur on the drafted memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the animal health (and production) field between Afghanistan and neighboring countries (Pakistan, Iran and Tajikistan); and (vi) identify issues and challenges in the field of veterinary services.

*Project: Building resilience and self-reliance of livestock keepers by improving control of Foot & Mouth Diseases & other Transboundary Animal Diseases. Project funded by the Government of Japan (US\$16.8 million, 2014-2018)*

## Promoting small-scale dairy production

Dairy is a key source of household income and quality nutrition, especially for women in rural areas. Although the country used to be self-sufficient in dairy products, low milk yields by local breeds, animal diseases, poor feeding, droughts, and the difficulties of marketing perishable commodities hampered the dairy industry since the war broke out in 2003. Since 2005, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), FAO has worked to promote dairy development activities with financial support from the Government of Germany and technical support from the Italian Government and IFAD. Major achievements include the development of an Integrated Dairy Scheme (IDS) model; the establishment of five small dairy processing plants and 64 milk collection centres in five provinces. Annual household income has increased from US\$371 to US\$852 between 2005 and 2017, through the sale of surplus milk. Milk production per cow has increased from 3.5 to 9.1 litres through the improvement of cross-breeding (through artificial insemination), and 5 600 smallholder farmers are now members of dairy cooperatives.

*Project: Dairy Industry Development in Kabul, Parwan and Logar Provinces. Project funded by IFAD through Government of Afghanistan (US\$8.5 million, 2014-2020)*

