



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

BELGIUM AND FAO

INCLUSIVE APPROACHES TO END HUNGER AND PROMOTE PROSPERITY

The partnership between FAO and Belgium has been nothing short of outstanding, allowing for successful work towards common development goals. Belgium is an innovative force that supports FAO's work towards food security, economic growth, employment and income generation for resilient and sustainable development. The energy and financial resources provided to FAO are an essential contribution not only to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, but also to improving the way we harness innovation, engage the private sector and tap into new sources of development finance, as required by the 2030 Agenda.

Promoting global food governance

FAO is instrumental in brokering a number of major international guidelines and agreements around the production and trade of food, including in the area of tenure rights. Belgium is a major supporter of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), which represent a historic breakthrough in global efforts to safeguard the legitimate rights of people to own, use and access land, forests and fisheries.

Belgium is among the largest backers of a multiyear project supporting VGGT implementation in 70 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. During the last biennium (2016–2017), these funds allowed FAO to work with national and regional partners to increase the capacities of civil society and grassroots organizations to implement the VGGT in ten countries. Other countries, meanwhile, received support in establishing effective national platforms of diverse actors to translate the VGGT into a system of people-centred land governance. International, national and local actors consequently learned to integrate and actively apply the new tenure principles in their local context.

Shared commitments

Belgium supports FAO across a wide range of funding modalities, from the Multipartner Programme Support Mechanism (FMM) to the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) and other humanitarian programmes. This partnership echoes priorities embedded in Belgium's development cooperation and humanitarian policies, which are based on:

- Improving policy coherence
- Fostering aid effectiveness
- Supporting the right to food and social protection
- Women's empowerment
- Protection of natural resources and the environment.

In December 2018, Belgium and FAO held their first strategic dialogue since the signing of the Framework Agreement in June 2016. The consultation, among others, aimed to reinforce collaboration between FAO and the different Belgian actors.

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Flexible funding for emergency response, resilience and early action

Belgium has championed FAO's work in humanitarian contexts, recognizing that aid incorporates emergency response as well as disaster prevention, preparedness and recovery, contributing to livelihoods that are more resilient in the long term. In line with its commitments under the Grand Bargain, Belgium has been a pioneer in flexible funding. Like no other partner, it has increased FAO's capacity to respond faster and earlier to emergencies through matchless support to SFERA. With its generous contributions of over US\$ 45 million, Belgium has been the largest contributor to SFERA from 2004–2017.

Enabling the immediate resumption of agricultural activities

In 2008, FAO and Belgium established the Agricultural Inputs Response Capacity (AIRC) window, allowing for rapid, quality agricultural emergency interventions aimed at protecting livelihoods, while strategically improving resilience to crises. In 2017, thanks to SFERA-AIRC funds, prompt responses were delivered in the Lake Chad Basin to support the agricultural and pastoral livelihoods of populations affected by the Boko Haram crisis. Similar interventions in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Horn of Africa helped conflict-affected communities and refugees, while interventions in the Caribbean restored farming and fishery infrastructures, providing livelihoods to populations impacted by hurricanes Irma and Maria. Likewise, agricultural and livestock assistance were provided in flood-affected areas of Southeast Asia.

Preparedness, mitigation and prevention

In 2017, Belgium became the first donor to invest in interventions aimed at anticipating crises through the SFERA-Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) window. EWEA funds allow FAO to rapidly initiate interventions — developing project proposals and starting tender processes with suppliers — while still liaising with resource partners for a larger-scale response. Belgium's contribution to SFERA-EWEA initiated early actions to protect livestock in Mongolia against potentially devastating winter conditions. Moreover, in 2018, Belgium also contributed around US\$ 1.2 million for the development of an early-warning and risk-mapping system to help farmers in sub-Saharan Africa manage the spread of the Fall Armyworm. In addition, US\$ 1.2 million were provided in the same period for the roll out of solar energy projects for farmers in Gaza, to address the critical shortages of electricity that limit agricultural production and food security.

Pathways for sustainable development: The FMM

With nearly US\$ 14 million towards the FMM between 2014–2017, Belgium assisted FAO in investing in rural services, information infrastructure and locally specific opportunities, to unleash virtuous cycles of development by improving diets, incomes and stability.

As an example, Belgium's support in developing and scaling up the Dimitra Clubs' approach in several countries across sub-Saharan Africa is particularly notable. The Clubs are informal groups of rural men, women and youth who voluntarily self-organize to tackle and resolve common problems in their communities, with their own resources. A recent US\$ 3.6 million project has achieved concrete results in food security and nutrition, climate-adapted agricultural practices, social and economic empowerment, social cohesion, resilience, peacebuilding, sanitation and the strengthening of community organizations.

Innovation and private sector engagement

Belgium works closely with FAO to leverage opportunities for transforming agricultural production through investments and innovation. With the support of Belgium, FAO is developing a portfolio of mobile applications such as AgriMarket, which provides farmers easy access to updated market and production information. Prototypes of the application have already been deployed in Rwanda and Senegal, and are now being scaled up. The development and implementation of such digital inclusion initiatives, and the scaling up of innovative digital services promotes access to market value chains.

Moreover, Belgium aspires to ensure sustainable agriculture in recipient countries, by supporting private sector development to achieve the SDGs and create more jobs. FAO's AgriInvest initiative is a potential channel for Belgium's collaboration in private sector investments.

