



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE IN RWANDA: A CASE STUDY

COMMITTED TO CHANGE

Rwanda is committed to bringing about positive change and has embraced the vision set forth by the Malabo Declaration and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Aiming to increase the resilience and the rural incomes of population, Rwanda strives to transform its agricultural sector, elevating it from a subsistence to a knowledge-based economy. Its ambition is to empower Rwandan farmers, equipping them with the skills and expertise required to become active market players, exporting their products to the region, rather than engaging solely with domestic markets.

PROGRESS UNDER THREAT

In 2014, Rwanda's vision of achieving a modern, fair and competitive agri-food sector was under threat. Undermined by natural and institutional challenges, progress was faltering. Climate uncertainty, soil erosion, challenging terrain and a lack of coordination were among the obstacles on the country's path to progress and inclusive growth.

Determined to overcome these obstacles, Rwanda requested support from FAO to identify the challenges and address them effectively. A partnership between the Government of Rwanda and FAO sought to accelerate positive change by adopting the sustainable food and agriculture (SFA) approach.

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES, EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES

FAO identified the main issues in Rwanda's agricultural production systems, and set priorities for action in keeping with the 2030 Agenda and the commitments of the Malabo Declaration.

This ambitious effort brought together the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI), the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB), Ministry of Environment (MoE), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as well as local authorities in the Rulindo District, farmers, production cooperatives, non-governmental organizations and other committed key players.



ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY FAO INCLUDED:

BIO-PHYSICAL AND PRODUCTION CHALLENGES	INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over-use of trees and shrubs as fuel and their removal for farming; • over-cultivation causing significant damage to soil structure and exposure to erosion from wind and rain; • soil erosion silting up lakes and rivers; • lack of or inappropriate crop rotations; • imbalance between nutrient removal and enrichment of soils in farming; • inappropriate use of water resources; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of inter-sectoral coordination and communication; • lack of multidisciplinary support from governmental institutions and development partners; • lack of capacity in the delivery of extension services; • inadequate investments and partnerships in support of SFA.

In particular, FAO highlighted the importance of establishing a holistic, cross-sectoral and multidimensional process to address these challenges.

SFA IMPACT IN RWANDA

The SFA project activities facilitated by FAO in Rwanda fostered a positive impact at national, district and community levels.

Cooperation is key: The Cross-Sectoral Task Force

The Cross-Sectoral Task Force (CSTF) was established to facilitate dialogue and partnerships among policy-makers and other stakeholders, simplifying coordination processes and strengthening the shared vision and approach to sustainable food and agriculture. The CSTF is now recognized by the Rwandan government and fully integrated as a platform for coordination of sustainable food and agriculture, following the five Principles of SFA.

Capacity building support in the Rulindo District

Close collaboration with local authorities, farmers and platforms such as the Rulindo District Joint Action Development Forum, allowed FAO to conduct a detailed assessment of the key issues impeding sustainable agricultural development in the District. The results of the assessment have been incorporated into the seven year District Development Strategy, which aims to address the issues of land scarcity and fragmentation, resource management and use, access to markets, finance and investments for local farmers, and more.

Learning to thrive: Farmer Field Schools

The FAO-led establishment of farmer field schools (FFS) has brought increased productivity and income for farmers, with

600 of them being trained in the Yanze catchment. The 22 FFS groups and 44 FFS facilitators are focusing on sustainable agricultural production and forest landscape restoration, enhancing the resilience of both communities and local ecosystems, and laying the foundations for achieving FAO's vision for SFA.

THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF SFA

1. increase productivity, employment and value addition in food systems;
2. protect and enhance natural resources;
3. Improve livelihoods and foster inclusive economic growth;
4. enhance the resilience of people, communities and ecosystems;
5. adapt governance to new challenges.

FAO'S VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

A world where **food is nutritious and accessible for everyone**, in which natural resources are managed in a way that maintains ecosystem functions to support **current and future human needs**.

In this vision, **farmers, pastoralists, fisher-folk, foresters and other rural dwellers** actively participate in, and benefit from, economic development, have decent employment conditions and work in a **fair price environment**.

Women, men and communities live in food security, and have **control over their livelihoods and equitable access to resources** which they use in an efficient way.

To find out more about SFA visit:
www.fao.org/sustainability

