



Food and Agriculture Organization  
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## ADVANCING ZERO HUNGER AND ELIMINATING MALNUTRITION IN THE ARAB REGION

April 2022

SDGs:



Country:	Member States of the League of Arab States (LAS)
Project Code:	TCP/RAB/3702
FAO Contribution:	USD 155 000
Duration:	1 January 2019 – 31 December 2021
Contact Info:	FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa FAO-RNE@fao.org

## Implementing Partners

The League of Arab States.

## Beneficiaries

Member States of the LAS.

## Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

The project contributed to the CPFs of all countries in the Arab Region through its over-arching approach.



## BACKGROUND

The League of Arab States was founded in March 1945. Its main goal is to “draw closer the relations between member States and coordinate collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries.” It serves as the regional organization of Arab states, with a focus on developing the economy, resolving disputes and coordinating political issues.

In February 2017, the Economic and Social Council of the LAS approved the establishment of a Arab High Level Sustainable Development Committee to coordinate the efforts of the region with regard to the implementation of the SDGs. The third meeting of the Committee, in December 2017, approved the establishment of a Subcommittee for Hunger Eradication, Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture in the Arab Region. The membership of the Subcommittee was composed of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation of the LAS. Its mandate was to monitor the achievement of SDG 2 in terms of ending hunger, improving food security and nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture and other integrated and related goals. It would do this by developing an Arab plan to support Arab countries’ efforts in implementation of the second goal of the SDGs, thus advancing FAO’s Zero Hunger Initiative in the region. In order to achieve this aim, the Secretariat of the Subcommittee for Ending Hunger in the Arab Region requested technical assistance from FAO.

## IMPACT

As the strategy developed under the project has not yet been implemented, its eventual impact remains to be seen. However, as implementation proceeds, the strategy is expected to contribute to sustained food and nutrition security, agricultural inclusive growth and socio-economic development throughout the region.

## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project successfully developed a Strategic Framework for Zero Hunger in the Arab Region for endorsement by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the LAS. This is one step forward towards the endorsement of the initiative by Heads of States and its implementation by member countries.

Despite the delay and difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, the project was able to deliver all three planned outputs. The first output concerned the preparation of an analytical document that would inform a Strategic Framework and Action Plan. These were prepared and endorsed by the LAS Arab Sustainable Development Committee in September 2021. The second output was devoted to raising the awareness of decision-makers of the contribution made by their specific sectors to resolving food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition. During Arab Sustainable Development Week (ASDW), organized annually by the LAS, a special session entitled “Towards Zero Hunger in the Arab Region” was organized in November 2019. A second Zero Hunger panel discussion was organized during the 41st FAO Conference in June 2019. Both these events helped to build the awareness of the role to be played by decision-makers in achieving Zero Hunger. The final output regarded awareness-raising among key stakeholders. The regional and subregional workshops originally envisaged could not take place because of COVID-19 restrictions. As an alternative, online consultations were held with 14 Arab countries in December 2021. A questionnaire was also prepared to gather the views of all member countries to inform the Strategic Framework and Action Plan.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

The project achieved its envisaged outcome despite delays in some activities because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The adoption of online consultations to replace the planned regional and subregional workshops led to considerable savings and the original budget of USD 500 000 was reduced to USD 155 000 as a result. The project faced minimum risks, other than those of the COVID-19 pandemic, and caused no environmental or social risks.



## FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

It is recommended that the Strategic Framework for Zero Hunger in the Arab Region be endorsed by the Heads of States concerned and that it be implemented in all member countries.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### 1. Capacity development

Food and nutrition security, the major focus of the project, receives considerable attention in the agenda of member countries. Most countries in the region have existing policies and institutions dealing with the issues. In addition, an increasing number of member countries have developed or are developing national food security strategies. The Strategic Framework developed by the project will aid member countries in revising their strategies to address food insecurity and malnutrition.

The Strategic Framework proposes an Action Plan to operationalize seven identified priorities and to enable their contextualization and adoption by governments and implementing partners at national level. The Framework was developed to support the Subcommittee for Eliminating Hunger of the League of the Arab States. In addition to member States, members of the Subcommittee include AOAD, FAO, WFP, ESCWA and the Department of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation of the LAS, as well as academia and civil organizations. As such, a strong partnership among stakeholders has already been established.

With regard to implementation, it is proposed that the Subcommittee for Ending Hunger of the Department for Sustainable Development and International Cooperation be responsible for overseeing implementation and that it discuss the additional capacity needed to assume this management responsibility as part of the plan-making process.

### 2. Gender equality

The Strategic Framework does not provide distinctions based on gender. By achieving food and nutrition security at regional, national, family and individual levels, both men and women will benefit.



### 3. Environmental sustainability

The Strategic Framework places high priority on sustainably increasing agricultural productivity through the sustainable management of natural resources.

### 4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

Except for the right to food, the project did not directly address human rights. However, the Strategic Framework places high priority on enhancing smallholders' access to production inputs and services, and to improvements in public services in rural areas, both of which are expected to contribute to the creation of gainful employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for rural youth, women and other targeted groups.

### 5. Technological sustainability

The capacity of the governments of the member countries to implement the strategic framework, given the political will to do so, is high.



## DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ☐ دائرة العمليات المالية - نوفمبر/ تشرين الثاني 2020 - جامعة الدول العربية  
الإطار الاستراتيجي الإقليمي العربي وخطة العمل بشأن القضاء على الجوع  
36 pp.
- ☐ FAO, WFP and LAS. 2020. The Arab Regional Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Zero Hunger. November 2020. 42 pp.

## ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Contribute to a sustained food and nutrition security, agricultural inclusive growth and socio economic development		
Outcome	Zero Hunger Initiative in the Arab Region endorsed and under implementation by member countries		
	Indicator	Number of countries which started implementation of Integrated Arab Action Plan for achieving SDG2 and Zero Hunger.	
	Baseline	0	
	End Target	8	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	As the initiative has yet to be launched and endorsed, the end target has not been achieved. The launch of the Initiative is expected to be organized during ASDW 2022.	
Output 1	“Integrated Arab Action Plan for achieving SDG2 and Zero Hunger” endorsed		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Integrated Arab Action Plan for achieving SDG2 and Zero Hunger.	Formulated and endorsed.	Partially
Baseline	0		
Comments	The Strategic Framework and Action Plan was endorsed by the LAS Arab Sustainable Development Committee in September 2021. There are two approval routes: either through the Sustainable Development Committee, then to ECOSOC and finally to the Summit; or for one or two countries to adopt the Framework and submit it directly to ECOSOC or the Summit for approval. Although this roadmap presents the first option, the second option could be followed if needed.		
Activity 1.1	Prepare an analytical document outlining the current and emerging trends in food security and nutrition, identify the existing policies and programmes, and identify potential bottlenecks and gaps to inform the development of an “Integrated Arab Action Plan on achieving SDG2 to end of hunger”. This paper will provide support for the “Subcommittee for Hunger Eradication, Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture”		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The document was prepared and incorporated in the developed Framework.	
Activity 1.2	Hold technical consultation meetings to discuss the first draft with the member states with the support of the Subcommittee Secretariat and revise the “white paper” accordingly		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Consultation meetings were organized through the Secretariat of the Subcommittee for Ending Hunger.	
Activity 1.3	Present Integrated Arab Action Plan for achieving SDG2 and Zero Hunger to Subcommittee for Ending Hunger and Committee of Arab High Level Sustainable Development, ECOSOC for endorsement		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	The document was endorsed by the Subcommittee for Ending Hunger and the Arab High Level Sustainable Development Committee and remained to be presented to the ECOSOC of the LAS for endorsement.	
Output 2	Decision-makers have increased awareness of the contribution of their specific sectors to resolve food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Panel discussion events conducted.	One event each in 2019 and 2020.	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	Within the activities of ASDW, organized annually by the LAS, a special session entitled “Towards Zero Hunger in the Arab Region” was organized in November 2019. A second Zero Hunger panel discussion was held during the 41st FAO Conference in June 2019 and was entitled “The Arab region towards Zero Hunger: Challenges and Opportunities”. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, ASDW was not organized in 2020 and 2021.		
Activity 2.1	Develop the concept note for SDG2-related panel discussions under the “2019 Arab Sustainable Development Week” and “2020 Arab Sustainable Development Week”, based on the outcomes of the “white paper” in agreement with the organizing committee of Arab Sustainable Development Week		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The document was prepared based on the outcomes of the “white paper” in agreement with the organizing committees, and was used in organizing the above two events.	

Activity 2.2	Define the profile of experts and speakers for each panel and extend the invitations for their participation		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	This activity was achieved.	
Activity 2.3	Prepare communication and publicity plan and material for each event		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	This activity was achieved.	
Activity 2.4	Organize the panel discussion events		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The events were organized as planned.	
Activity 2.5	Prepare a report of outcomes and recommendation for each event. The report is to be technically cleared by the project Lead Technical Officer		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	This activity was achieved.	
Output 3	Regional and subregional workshops for awareness-raising		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Subregional workshops.	3	Partially
Baseline	0		
Comments	The Strategic Framework and Action Plan were endorsed by the LAS Arab Sustainable Development Committee in September 2021. Countries were consulted on the first draft in 2020. However, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face workshops were not possible. As an alternative, online consultations with countries and other stakeholders were organized in December 2021. Fourteen Arab countries participated in the consultation. A questionnaire was prepared to gather views of all countries. These responses will feed into the Action Plan of the Strategic Framework.		
Activity 3.1	Develop concept note for a series of regional and sub-regional advocacy, consensus building sub-regional policy dialogues on the white paper to raise awareness of issues and consensus on proposed pillars of action plan		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The document was prepared and used to guide the consultations. A questionnaire was prepared to gather views of all countries.	
Activity 3.2	Define the profile of experts and speakers for each dialogue		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	This activity was achieved.	
Activity 3.3	Prepare communication and publicity plan and material for each event		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments		
Activity 3.4	Organize sub-regional workshops agreed by stakeholders		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	Owing to the pandemic, this activity was replaced by online consultations.	
Activity 3.5	Prepare a report of outcomes and recommendation for each event. The report is to be technically cleared by the project LTO		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments		

**Partnerships and Outreach**

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