



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

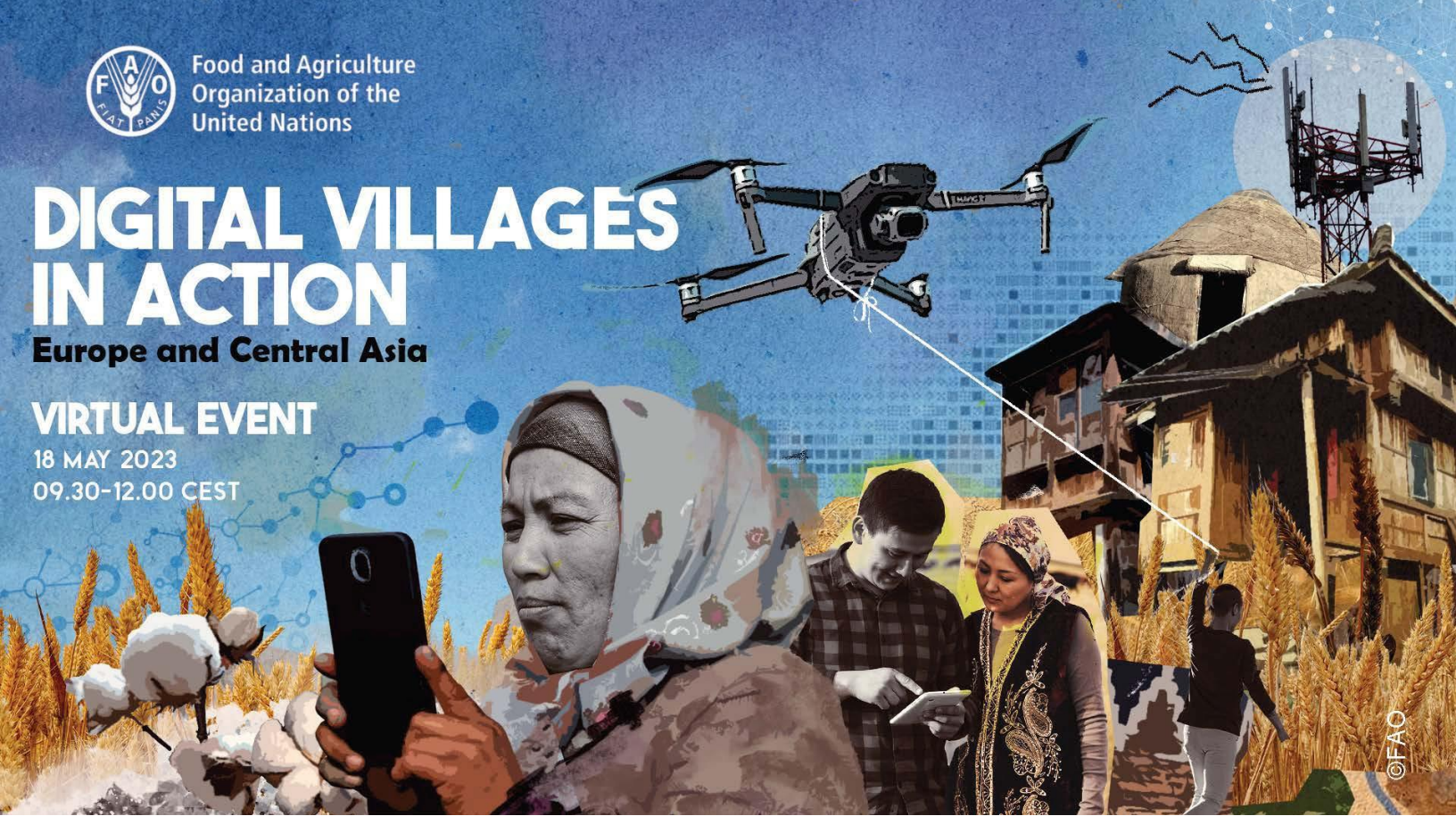
# DIGITAL VILLAGES IN ACTION

Europe and Central Asia

VIRTUAL EVENT

18 MAY 2023

09.30-12.00 CEST



Register in advance: <https://bit.ly/3p6WEka>

## Background

Rural communities in Europe and Central Asia suffer from a triple divide: the urban-rural, gender, and digital divide which is locking them in a circle of decline, leading to limited economic opportunities and inadequate access to essential services. Nevertheless, digitalization and innovation can serve as drivers of rural development, unlocking transformative processes to improve access to services, markets, and knowledge, leading to increased agricultural productivity and opportunities. With digital technologies becoming more accessible, useful, and affordable, they have the potential to significantly improve the livelihoods of rural communities in the region.

To sustainably harness the opportunities brought by digitalization, **FAO's Digital Villages Initiative (DVI) is taking action to accelerate the digital transformation of agriculture and rural areas across eight countries of Europe and Central Asia: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, and Uzbekistan.**

The vision of DVI in Europe and Central Asia is to empower every village and rural community to utilize digital technologies to increase agricultural productivity and improve rural livelihoods, leveraging their local strengths. DVI's approach in the region is inclusive and participatory, whereby interventions are co-created with rural communities and designed to enhance their capacities and build their resilience while ensuring long-term sustainability.

Furthermore, FAO aims to foster linkages and cooperation across villages and institutions through **"DVI twinning"**. The approach stimulates the exchange of knowledge, good practices, and technology transfer between nearby or geographically dispersed villages or institutions, at the national or international level.

## Objectives

This virtual event will introduce the Digital Villages Initiative (DVI) – its main concepts, principles, and methodology – as well as bring together policy actors, project stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries to launch the DVI actions in eight programme countries, discuss their scope and objectives, previous successful digital initiatives, and develop a shared understanding of the projects' expected outcomes.

More specifically, the event will launch the following projects:

- **“Digital Villages Initiative in Action”**, in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Türkiye (TCP/RER/3905 (728982));
- **“Piloting Digital Villages in Central Asia”**, focusing on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan (FMM/GLO/171/MUL)

The event will also provide the opportunity to achieve synergies with other regional DVI projects, such as the “Support to the implementation of the “Smart Village” concept in an integrated community development approach” in Azerbaijan (TCP/AZE/3902).

## Date and time

18 May 2023, from 09.30 to 12.00 CEST on Zoom, with English/Russian interpretation.

## Provisional Agenda

	<b>Opening</b>
09.30 - 09.40	<p><b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b></p> <p>An introduction to the vision behind the FAO 1000 Digital Villages Initiative and its potential to solve the agricultural challenges of Europe and Central Asia.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Vladimir Olegovich Rakhmanin, Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia</i></li><li>• <i>Maximo Torero, FAO Chief Economist (recorded message)</i></li></ul>
09.40 - 09.50	<p><b>Introducing DVI in Europe and Central Asia</b></p> <p>In the course of 2023 and 2024, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is supporting DVI pilots in several countries, including Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, and Uzbekistan.</p> <p>This session will introduce the Digital Villages Initiative (DVI), its main concepts, principles and methodology, and discuss scope and objectives of the upcoming DVI actions.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniela Di Gianantonio, <i>FAO Digital Agriculture Team Leader</i></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Session 1 – DVI in Central Asia and Azerbaijan</b></p>
09.50 - 10.15	<p><b>Ministerial roundtable: Central Asia and Azerbaijan</b></p> <p>Deputy Ministers and high-level officials of <b>Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan</b> will open the second segment of the event and are invited to make a short statement sharing their vision for promoting DVI in their respective countries and region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarvan Jafarov, <i>Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan</i></li> <li>• Alisherov Nurdin Kuvanychbekovich, <i>Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Kyrgyz Republic</i></li> <li>• Ramin Gasanov Alievich, <i>Director of Investment and Grants Department of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan</i></li> <li>• High-level representative from Tajikistan tbd</li> </ul> <p><i>Facilitated by Viorel Gutu, Subregional Coordinator, FAO Sub-Regional Office for Central Asia</i></p>
10.15 - 10.45	<p><b>Introducing DVI in Central Asia and Azerbaijan: experiences from project countries</b></p> <p>Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are building on successful past and ongoing digital initiatives for the implementation of DVI. In this session, speakers from each of the project countries will showcase results, best practices, and achievements in the field of digital agriculture that are providing solid grounds for the implementation of DVI.</p> <p>The session will make focus on DVI in Uzbekistan, where the Smart Farming project and DVI are joining forces to bring IoT smart devices into smallholders' greenhouses, develop digital literacy and stimulate innovation in village Novkent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Azerbaijan - Elmaddin Namazov, <i>Programme Coordinator, FAO Azerbaijan</i></li> <li>• Kyrgyzstan - Kanat Sultanaliyev, <i>Executive Director, Tian Shan Policy Center of the American University of Central Asia (tbc)</i></li> <li>• Tajikistan - Veronika Sherova, <i>FAO Digital Agriculture Analyst</i></li> <li>• Uzbekistan - Katerina Antanevich, <i>FAO Digital Agriculture Specialist and Sociologist, will join the session live from village Novkent in Uzbekistan</i></li> </ul>
10.45 - 10.55	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>

	<p><b>Session 2 - DVI in the Western Balkans, Türkiye and Georgia</b></p>
<p>10.55 - 11.20</p>	<p><b>Ministerial roundtable: Western Balkans, Georgia and Türkiye</b></p> <p>Deputy Ministers and high-level officials of <b>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia</b> and <b>Türkiye</b> will open the second segment of the event and are invited to make a short statement sharing their vision for promoting DVI in their respective countries and region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Slobodan Cvijanović, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i></li> <li>● <i>Metin Türker, Director General of Agricultural Research and Policies of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Republic of Türkiye</i></li> <li>● <i>Other high-level representatives from Albania and Georgia</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Facilitated by Nabil Gangi, Regional Deputy Representative, FAO REU</i></p>
<p>11.20 - 11.40</p>	<p><b>Introducing DVI in Western Balkans, Georgia and Türkiye: experiences from project countries</b></p> <p>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Türkiye are building on successful past and ongoing digital initiatives for the implementation of DVI. In this session, speakers from each of the project countries will showcase results, best practices, and achievements in the field of digital agriculture that are providing solid grounds for the implementation of DVI.</p> <p>Cooperation, partnerships, knowledge sharing and technology transfer among actors is critical for the success of digital villages and smart villages. The session will make focus on DVI twinning, which was piloted between Permet, a future Digital Village of Albania and Lormes, a smart village of France.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Albania - Barbara Battioni Romanelli, UN Fellow, FAO Albania</i></li> <li>● <i>Bosnia and Herzegovina - Grujica Vico, Digital Villages Specialist</i></li> <li>● <i>Georgia - Dragan Angelovski, FAO Technical Adviser</i></li> <li>● <i>Türkiye - Frank Hollinger, FAO Senior Rural Finance Officer (tbc)</i></li> </ul>
<p>11.40 - 11.50</p>	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p>
	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p>
<p>11.50 - 12.00</p>	<p><b>Take home messages and closing</b></p> <p>Take home messages, final remarks and way forward for the DVI in Europe and Central Asia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Dejan Jakovljevic, FAO Chief Information Officer</i></li> </ul>

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Raimund Jehle, FAO Regional Programme Leader</i></li></ul> |
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