

165th Session of the Council

FAO's new Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025

FAO embarked on an inclusive process with the Members to develop a new vision and subsequent update of the 2013 *Strategy for Partnership with the Private Sector*, which was encouraged by the 163rd Session of the Council in late 2019. FAO's new Strategy for Private Sector Engagement 2021-2025 (CL165/4 Rev.1) ("the Strategy") has been prepared based on the outcome of a highly consultative process and builds on: (i) the recommendations and needs expressed by FAO Members; (ii) the recommendations and feedback received from private sector actors; (iii) lessons learned from other United Nations (UN) Agencies, particularly the Rome-based Agencies; (iv) FAO's own experience of the 2013 Strategy; (v) strong demand from FAO's technical, regional, subregional and country offices to enhance private sector engagements; and (vi) the independent evaluation conducted in 2019.

Following the extensive consultations with Members through the Regional Groups, as well as a series of membership consultations led by the Chairperson of the Programme Committee, the Strategy seeks to promote a more proactive and catalytic role for the Organization in support of its membership by setting out a clear path towards more innovative partnerships with the private sector. Management appreciates the high level of interest, valuable insights, perspectives and constructive recommendations from FAO Members made throughout the extensive consultation process prior to, and during, the relevant discussions in the Council Committees.

The proposed new Strategy is a 'living' document, reflecting FAO's medium-term vision for engagement with the private sector in light of emerging development trends and common practices of the United Nations (UN) System, while recognizing that we are going through an extremely complex and rapidly evolving socio-economic period. FAO's private sector engagement is intended to bring about transformative change and innovation, as well as measurable sustainable impact and benefits, to meet our aspiration of Leaving No One Behind through sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life. This is fully aligned with the outline of the new Strategic Framework, which also emphasizes the importance of transformative partnerships, including with the private sector.

The Strategy's ambition is that FAO's private sector engagements be smart and strategic, to scale up collective multi-stakeholder efforts and to bring country-owned and country-led innovative solutions to help FAO Members achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ultimately maximising the positive impact on the beneficiaries supported by FAO.

The Strategy includes: (i) a new vision for the proactive development of partnerships with the private sector; (ii) principles for engagement; (iii) the identification of key strategic areas of engagement; (iv) refreshed and expanded mechanisms through which partnerships can be forged; (v) a fit-for-purpose due diligence approach to assessing and managing risk; and (vi) new ways to assess and measure expected results from partnerships.

The document (CL 165/4 Rev.1) also describes the main actions required to operationalize this Strategy. The Strategy proposes a series of new agile approaches and instruments to ensure effective engagement, while proposing the "principles for engagement" aimed at protecting FAO's neutrality, impartiality, integrity and reputation, as well as ensuring adherence to the values of FAO and the UN System at large.

It should be noted that enhanced collaboration with the private sector under this Strategy is based on the understanding that: (i) given the intrinsic nature of its membership and governance and FAO's status as

an intergovernmental organization of the United Nations System, the main interlocutors of FAO are the Members; and (ii) the Basic Texts, rules, procedures or composition of FAO's Governing Bodies will not be affected by this.

The overarching legal principles that should govern FAO's engagement with the private sector, as reflected in the Report of the 111th Session of the Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters (CCLM 111/2) and endorsed by the CCLM (CL165/12), will be fully adhered throughout the implementation of the Strategy.

In addition to the Strategy document (CL165/4 Rev.1), two supplementary Information Notes (CL 165/4 Rev.1 Information Note 1 and CL 165/4 Rev.1 Information Note 2) are presented to the 165th Session of the Council under Item 4, following the specific request from the Joint Meeting of the 129th Session of the Programme Committee and the 183rd Session of the Finance Committee. In particular, the Council is invited to review CL 165/4 Rev.1 Information Note No. 2, which sets out Management's proposal for actions to be taken, should the Strategy be adopted by the 165th Session of the Council.

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