



REGIONAL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION WEEK FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA 2-5 OCTOBER 2023 HYBRID EVENT

Background

Science-based approaches and innovations, including those that draw on local and indigenous knowledge, show strong potential for improving the resilient capacity of agroecosystems to respond to multiple crises and support the transformation to fairer and greener agrifood systems.

Technology, innovation and data are considered accelerators of the programmatic interventions within the [FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31](#), which is centred on transforming agrifood systems to become more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all, leaving no one behind.

FAO's first [Science and Innovation Strategy](#), endorsed in 2022, lays the bases for enhancing the use of science and innovation in FAO's technical interventions and normative guidance. It aims to strengthen FAO's capacities through science and innovation to support the implementation of the Strategic Framework and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This strategy is complementary to and interlinked with the [FAO Strategy on Climate Change](#), the [FAO Strategy for Private Sector Engagement](#) and the [FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors](#).

Building on the outcomes of the 2021 Regional Science and Innovation Consultation, the FAO Regional Action Plan for the Science and Innovation Strategy for Europe and Central Asia 2022–2025 seeks to enhance capacities for science, technology and innovation while strengthening institutions and governance, enabling regulatory frameworks, and reinvigorating partnerships in the region.

To find solutions to the complex challenges facing agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia, it is necessary to harness science, technology and innovation. Many existing participatory approaches, technologies and practices – including the knowledge of farmers, rural communities and Indigenous Peoples – are rooted in science and innovation and allow for the exploration of mutual learning and inclusive transformation.

The event is part of the [FAO Science and Innovation Forum 2023](#), aligned with the World Food Forum theme “Agrifood systems transformation accelerates climate action” and within the framework of a project to reinforce regional capacities in science–policy interfaces, supporting the implementation of the FAO Regional Science and Innovation Action Plan.

Objective



In this event, FAO aims to provide a platform for governments, research institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to discuss and share experiences related to the needs, gaps and opportunities for integrating science, research, innovation as well as the–policy interface mechanisms in accelerating the transformation to more sustainable, inclusive and resilient agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia.

Expected outcomes

- Gaps are identified and needs assessed for relevant, legitimate, transparent and inclusive science–policy interfaces and for ongoing and effective dialogue supporting science- and evidence-based decision-making.
- Knowledge and experiences are shared to support the harnessing of science and innovation at regional and national levels to enable science- and evidence-based decision-making through context-specific, sustainable and systemic approaches.
- Internal technical capacities are strengthened in science–policy interfaces and science communication for policy purposes, with relevance to topics critical for the region.
- Collaboration and networking are enhanced to facilitate connections and synergistic actions and build and advance transformative partnerships on science and innovation for agrifood systems.
- Approaches are explored for integrating science–policy interfaces with the Regional Technical Platform on Green Agriculture.

Target audience

- Representatives from national governments and development agencies for the region
- Representatives of research institutes, members of academia and scientists, including university students and young researchers
- Farmers, small-scale producers, Indigenous Peoples, civil society and the private sector
- FAO technical staff from the FAO Regional Office and the FAO Subregional and Country Offices

Partners

- Hungarian Research Institute
- Agrarian Chamber of Hungary
- Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- International Atomic Energy Agency Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
- Polytechnic University of Madrid

Methodology

The event will be conducted in Budapest, Vienna, at least three FAO Country Offices, and in digital format. Events in Budapest will be held on 2, 3 and 4 October, and a visit to Vienna will be held on 5 October. During the week, events will be held at various FAO Country Offices in the region. Please see the agenda for more information.

The four-day Science and Innovation Week will include the following blocks:

I. High-level regional dialogue on the science, innovation and policy interface

Discussions will bring together policymakers and scholars to explore policy implications, regulatory frameworks and strategies to foster an enabling environment for science and innovation to accelerate integrated climate change and biodiversity actions for resilient agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia.

II. Capacity-building workshop

Interactive sessions will delve into specific topics, allowing participants to engage in in-depth discussions, share experiences and develop practical solutions.

III. Science and innovation marketplace

An exhibition area will allow researchers, startups and organizations to demonstrate their innovative products, prototypes and research projects. Marketplace exhibitors will introduce digital and non-digital innovations and solutions from various areas of agrifood value chains. The event will facilitate a discussion on topics relevant to green agriculture, introduce possible pathways to green agrifood systems and incorporate and support already available innovations and scientific results in decision-making processes.

IV. Study tour

A visit will be held to the [Joint FAO and International Atomic Energy Agency Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture](#) in Vienna, Austria.

V. Science and innovation days at FAO Country Offices

During the week, a series of captivating events are scheduled to take place in various FAO Country Offices throughout the region, to shed a light on the transformative power of cutting-edge ideas and technological advancements. Bringing together thought leaders, policymakers, and experts from the agricultural and scientific communities, the event will shine a light on the latest scientific breakthroughs, innovative solutions, and forward-thinking approaches that are reshaping the agrifood systems landscape.

Draft Agenda

October 2, 2023

Opening event of the Regional Science and Innovation week

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, Budapest

Time	Presentation	Speaker
	Moderator	Valentina Gasbarri , FAO REU
15:00-15:05	Opening remarks	Nabil Gangi , Officer in Charge, FAO REU
15:05-15:10	What is the role of Science and Innovation in supporting FAO regional priorities and agrifood system transformation?	Raimund Jehle , Regional Programme Leader for Europe and Central Asia, FAO REU
15:10-15:15	Why Regional Science and Innovation Week?	Tania Santivanez , Agricultural officer and Focal point for Science and Innovation, FAO REU
15:15-15:35	Revolutionizing Agrifood Systems: A Conversation with AI on Science, Innovation, and Technology	ChatGPT
15:40-16:30	Science and Innovation Scavenger Hunt	Facilitator: Zsuzsanna Keresztes , FAO REU <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-ups • REU Healthy Diets team • REU Digital Agriculture Team • REU communication team • Institute of Agricultural Studies • Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Science • Czech University of Life Sciences • Journalists
16:30-17:30	Networking & Refreshments	

October 3, 2023

Regional Dialogue on Science, Innovation and Policy Interface

Danubius Hotel Helia, Budapest, Kárpát u. 62-64

Time	Presentation	Speaker
	Moderator:	Raimund Jehle , Regional Programme Leader for Europe and Central Asia, FAO REU

10:00-10:30	Welcoming remarks	Nabil Gangi , Officer in Charge, FAO REU Ismahane Elouafi , FAO Chief Scientist Anikó Juhász , Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary
	Introduction of the S&I week	Tania Santivanez , Agricultural officer and Focal point for Science and Innovation, FAO REU
10:30-11:45	Plenary 1: Science, Innovation and Policy Interfaces	
	Building a common approach on Science-Policy Interfaces	Patrick Caron , Director, The Montpellier Advanced Knowledge Institute on Transitions, Montpellier University
	EU policy on Research, Science and Innovation	Magdalena Gajdzinska , Research Policy Officer, Unit for Food Systems and Bioeconomy, DG for Research and Innovation, European Commission
	Academic work and Science–Policy Interfaces	Fatbardh Sallaku , Rector of the Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania
	Strengthening Science-policy Interfaces for agrifood systems	Preetmoninder Lidder , Technical Advisor, FAO
	Status of Science-Policy Interfaces in the ECA region	Christine Deane , Science-Policy Interfaces Specialist, FAO REU
11:45-12:00	Coffee break	
12:00-13:00	Plenary 2: Accelerating integrated climate change and biodiversity actions for resilient and adaptive agrifood systems in Europe and Central Asia	
	Science & Innovation for more resilient agrifood systems	Robin Fears , Biosciences Programme Director, European Academies' Science Advisory Council
	Co-mainstreaming climate and biodiversity	Siiri Mäkelä and Matthew Billot , Issue-Based Coalition on Environment and Climate Change in Europe and Central Asia region
	Science communication for greater policy coherence on climate change and biodiversity	Maja Prijatelj Videmsek , journalist, Slovenia
13:00-14:30	Lunch	

14:30-15:10	<p>Panel discussion 1: Science-Policy interfaces for addressing climate change and biodiversity loss</p>	<p>David Herák, Vice-dean for International Relations, Faculty of Engineering, Czech University of Life Sciences</p> <p>Mariam Jorjadze, Director, Biological Farming Association Elkana, Georgia</p> <p>Giorgi Razmadze, Senior Specialist at the Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia</p> <p>Marta ArnesGarcia, International Consultant on Nature based Solutions and GIAHS, FAO REU</p> <p>Moderator: Jeremy Schlickerieder, FAO REU</p>
15:10-15:50	<p>Panel discussion 2: Science-based green policies in the ECA region</p>	<p>Luis Gonzaga García-Montero, Polytechnic University of Madrid</p> <p>Sebastian Leckner, Rostock University</p> <p>Cristina Rusnac, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Moldova</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, North Macedonia (TBC)</p> <p>Moderator: Dmitry Zvyagintsev, FAO REU</p>
15:50-16:30	<p>Panel discussion 3: Science-policy-society interface and inclusive access to innovation and technology for more resilient agrifood systems</p>	<p>Celia Burgaz, Young Scientists Group, World Food Forum</p> <p>Merita Mece, Gender Specialist, FAO Albania</p> <p>Soliev Shamsiddin, Deputy Head of the Department of International Relations, Science and Implementation of Scientific Achievements, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan</p> <p>Jahongir Dehqonov, Director, NGO Fund for Poverty Reduction, Tajikistan</p> <p>Moderator: Anna Kanshieva, FAO REU</p>
16:30-16:45	Coffee break	
16:45-17:15	<p>Harvesting innovation: roundtable with food-tech visionaries</p>	Exhibitors of the Science and Innovation Marketplace

October 4, 2023

REU capacity-building on Science-Policy Interface

Danubius Hotel Helia, Budapest, Kárpát u. 62-64

Time	Item	Responsible
10:00-10:05	Objectives of the capacity-building	Tania Santivanez
10:05-10:45	Keynote: Introduction to Science-Policy Interface Mechanisms (followed by the Q&A)	Christine Deane
10:45-11:15	Joint Exercise: Mapping the SPIs in the ECA region	
11:15-11:30	Explaining the group work	Christine Deane
	Introduction of the Regional Priorities	Morten Hartvigsen Mary Kenny Tania Santivanez Keigo Obara
11:30-11:45	Coffee break	
11:45-13:00	Group work: Exploring the SPIs' potential and challenges for the transformation of agrifood systems in the ECA region	
13:00-14:30	Lunch	
14:30-14:45	Reporting the group work	Christine Deane
14:45-15:00	Q&A	
15:00-16:00	SPI simulation role-game	Facilitator: Christine Deane
16:00-16:20	Simulation Role Game: Reporting	
16:20-16:30	The road ahead	FAO-REU
16:30-16:45	Coffee break	

October 2-4, 2023

Science and Innovation Marketplace

The marketplace aims to raise awareness among the Science and Innovation Week's participants on agriculture-related innovations, market solutions, and scientific work and their practical implementation. The exhibition area will include the in-person exhibitors' spaces and poster exhibition. Call for expressions of interest will be sent out to select the exhibitors.

October 5, 2023

Study visit to the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture, Vienna

Time	Item
06:30-10:00	Transfer: Budapest – Vienna
10:00-10:30	Coffee, refreshments
10:30-11:00	Welcome remarks – IAEA Introduction of REU and S&I Week: Towards cooperation with European and Central Asian countries - Nabil Gangi, Officer in Charge, FAO REU
11:00-11:30	Presentation of the Center
11:30-13:00	Group Tours around the facilities and two Laboratories
13:00-14:15	Lunch
14:15-16:00	Group Tours around the facilities and three Laboratories
16:00-20:00	Transfer: Vienna – Budapest

Science & Innovation Days at FAO Country Offices

3 October	Science and Innovation Day dedicated to the Bacteriophages for Sustainable Ecosystem in partnership with the World Health Organization, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, and the Georgian Association for General and Applied Microbiology	FAO Georgia
3 October	Science and Innovation Day in collaboration with the State Agrarian University in Ganja	FAO Azerbaijan
3 October	Science and Innovation Day in collaboration with the Kyrgyz Agrarian University and the Ministry of Agriculture	FAO Kyrgyzstan



6-7 October	International Scientific-Practical Conference on "Water Resources, Innovations, Resource - Energy Conservation"	FAO Tajikistan
-------------	---	----------------

DRAFT