

**FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE (ERC)****Thirty-first Session****Voronezh, Russian Federation, 16-18 May 2018****Implementing the FAO Strategic Framework through Regional Initiatives****Side Event 3****Thursday, 17 May 2018****13.00 – 14.00 hours****SAPPHIRE Meeting room****Background/objective**

FAO's Reviewed Strategic Framework was approved by the FAO Conference at its 38th session in 2013. It specifies five cross-cutting Strategic Objectives that are closely aligned with the most relevant and urgent development problems faced by member countries and by the development community. The Strategic Objectives have guided the formulation of the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2018–21 and the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) 2018–19, both of which are closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Medium Term Plan and Programme of Work and Budget, which were approved by the FAO Conference at its 40th session in July 2017, specify the Strategic Programmes that in turn build the overall framework for the Regional Initiatives, which effectively respond to regional priorities.

In order to address the agreed-upon regional priorities in the 2018–19 biennium, two ongoing Regional Initiatives have been revised, and a new Regional Initiative on sustainable natural resource management under a changing climate has been conceptualized. Additionally, support in the area of food security has been embedded in the three Regional Initiatives besides other cross-cutting fields. The programmatic approach of the Regional Initiatives has been enhanced in order to address key regional priority issues, to support the implementation of the country programme in a more coherent manner, and to mobilize FAO's technical work in an integrated manner. This last point should help FAO better respond to country demand for coordinated support to the interlinked development processes and to the ongoing setting of SDG targets at national levels.

Regional Initiatives in 2018–19 are listed below. Their main focus and components are presented in ERC paper ERC/18/5.

- Regional Initiative 1: Empowering smallholders and family farms for improved rural livelihood and poverty reduction
- Regional Initiative 2: Improving agrifood trade and market integration
- Regional Initiative 3: Sustainable natural resource management under a changing climate

The objective of the side event is to highlight the importance, role and modalities of Regional Initiatives in providing direction and a programmatic umbrella for the implementation of FAO's Strategic Framework and for delivery of results at regional and country levels. As Regional Initiatives promote the sharing of experience among countries, the side event provides participants with an opportunity to learn how the Regional Initiatives can best support their work and address their major priority areas.

**Key messages/expected outcomes**

- In line with the Strategic Programmes providing effective direction for FAO's work, the Regional Initiatives ensure programmatic focus to address key regional priority issues and guide and support the implementation of the country programme and regional work plans in a more coherent manner in order to increase country-level impact.
- They are an effective means to mobilize and integrate FAO's technical work at regional and country levels in order to better respond to country demand for coordinated support to the interlinked development processes and the ongoing setting of SDG targets at national levels.
- The Regional Initiatives' enhanced programmatic approach further ensures that cross-cutting issues such as nutrition, gender, statistics, governance and climate change are adequately addressed and better mainstreamed in the national and regional programmes.

**Language:** The Side Event will be interpreted in English and Russian language.