



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Technical Consultation

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Implementation in Europe and Central Asia

FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU)
3-4 September 2019

- Concept Note -

SDG Implementation in Europe and Central Asia: The Role of Food and Agriculture

In the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Europe and Central Asia region as a whole has made considerable progress towards eradicating hunger. Despite this progress, significant challenges persist when it comes to e.g. food security and nutrition for all, the triple burden of malnutrition – overweight and obesity in combination with undernourishment and micronutrient deficiencies, as well as rural poverty, land ownership, climate change, land degradation, gender equality and access to social services.

Comprising more than 50 countries, the Europe and Central Asia region is very vast and diverse, and agriculture and food systems are key sectors providing employment and livelihoods. Efforts in the food and agriculture sector have the potential to advance progress on multiple SDGs simultaneously and thereby accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To realize this potential, it will require policies that foster the sustainability and resilience of the food systems. It will moreover be necessary to apply an integrated approach to implement the SDGs and to reduce the risks of negative interactions among different parts of the food systems while building on the synergies among them.

While countries are actively implementing activities that help achieve the SDGs, it is critical that efforts support the transformative change that is embedded in the 2030 Agenda. This transition requires among others: changing how sectors are governed, restructuring institutions, better dialogue, strengthening policy coherence, developing partnerships, alignment of investments as well as prioritizing those actions that achieve measurable results on the ground.¹ Targeted plans and agreements for rapid, scalable results play an important role in supporting the required transformative change. Additional aspects that can support transitioning to sustainable development are: rural investment, strengthened farmers' co-operatives, public-private partnerships, accessible policy forums and better coordination across ministries, all with a focus on people, their resilience and livelihoods as well as the environment.²

FAO's Support to Member Countries in Implementing the SDGs

¹ 'Our priorities – The Strategic Objectives of FAO'. FAO, 2019.

² Transforming Food and Agriculture to Achieve the SDGs, 20 interconnected actions to guide decision-makers, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2018.

The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) operates approximately 130 projects in the region and assists member countries in supporting the SDGs through the Country Programme Frameworks (CPFs). The CPFs are signed between FAO and the Member States and are aligned to FAO's overall Strategic Framework. The FAO Strategic Framework identifies five objectives, as entry points for grounded and comprehensive policy programmes and plans that help maximize contribution of food and agriculture to achieve sustainable development. These are:

1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises

Supporting the framework, the SDG Guidelines '*Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs*³ help promote policy integration and strengthen the national contributions to achieve a broad range of SDG targets. As countries actively support the implementation of the SDGs, there is a need to further build on- and operationalize these guidelines.

Technical Consultation on SDG Implementation in Europe and Central Asia

In order to discuss existing efforts, institutional structures and capacities in member countries, REU is organizing the '*Technical Consultation on SDG Implementation in Europe and Central Asia*'. The Consultation will discuss policy and programming efforts in support of the transformative, inclusive and participatory principles to achieve the SDGs.

Based on the overall importance of the food and agriculture related priorities of the 2030 Agenda, the consultation will include examples of national experiences, best practices and challenges related to implementing the SDGs. Building on FAO SDG guidelines '*Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs*', the consultation aims to discuss how these can be used by countries in order to accelerate SDG achievement.

The consultation will go into further depth on some key areas that can support SDG implementation in countries such as: integrated sectoral policies and coordination; mainstreaming the SDGs into policies and programs while building on synergies between the SDGs; multi-stakeholder partnership cooperation as well as the importance of SDG indicators for monitoring progress.

Purpose

The purpose of the consultation is to share experiences and knowledge on SDG implementation as well as to identify priorities that can help member countries in advancing their respective SDG implementation. The consultation will also help to determine areas where REU can support countries in achieving sustainable development.

Objectives

1. Exploring opportunities to strengthen SDG implementation at the country level through the FAO SDG guidelines '*Transforming food and agriculture to achieve the SDGs*'.
2. Promote regional knowledge and experience sharing in SDG implementation related to sustainable food and agriculture that help strengthen national capacities for more effective and integrated sectoral policies, strategies and programmes related to sustainable food and agriculture.
3. Assessing potential key policy measures required for addressing selected SDG targets.

³ FAO publication available at <http://www.fao.org/3/I9900EN/i9900en.pdf>.

4. Promoting multi-stakeholder and inter-ministerial dialogue on SDG implementation to address SDG trade-offs and synergies.
5. Identifying key follow-up actions on the policy measures required for advancing SDG achievement and better understanding of possible FAO support.
6. Map support needed, including capacities, resources, knowledge, tools, and partnerships required to scale up SDG implementation, monitor progress and accelerate results

Participants

Government Representatives (from MoA, line Ministries, SDG Coordination bodies) and non-state actors working in the food and agriculture sector from selected countries of the region; from FAO: relevant FAORs/AFAORs, REU Senior management, REU RI Delivery Managers, REU SP Focal Points, REU SDG Coordination Team, HQ SPLs or SP Focal Points, FAO HQ ESD/DDN.

Venue/Time

The Technical Consultation of the SDGs will take place on 3-4 September 2019 at (Venue tbc) in Budapest, Hungary.

Format

The technical consultation will consist of presentations, panel- and working group discussions.