



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

FAO Regional Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors in Europe and Central Asia

16-17 November 2021

11:00 – 13:00 (Budapest Time - CET)

CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

Biodiversity is essential for the protection and restoration of ecosystems and sustainability of our food systems: it provides a diverse and heterogeneous biological basis for distinct and resilient production systems, for the pollination of cultures, for increased food security and nutrition, and adaptation to the impacts of the changing climate. It is strongly embedded in the knowledge and skill of smallholders and family farmers, traditions of indigenous peoples and local communities, custodians of biodiversity.

The Europe and Central Asia region includes four biodiversity hotspots (the Caucasus, Irano-Anatolian, Mediterranean Basin, and Mountains of Central Asia) and hosts a great variety of climates, landscapes, aquatic environments, soil types, and cultures, and hence also biodiversity. Being part of the primary centres of origin of crop plants, the region is home to great number of wild relatives of cultivated plants and domesticated animals.

Despite the lack of monitoring systems and reliable data, the loss of biodiversity is a reality in the region (FAO, 2021; FAO, 2019; IPBES, 2018). Rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystems are threatened by changes in land use and intensification in agricultural sectors. In Central Asian countries, the combination of excessive water use and limited water resources puts considerable stress on the aquatic ecosystems and can jeopardize food production. Forest loss and climate change, along with the proliferation of invasive alien species, also represent a major global threat to regional biodiversity. The problem of genetic erosion caused by inter alia the steady trend for replacement of local varieties with modern ones is common in the region.

The majority of the people in the region, still live in rural areas. Agriculture plays an important role in people's livelihoods and, due to its importance, is a major user of the region's natural resources. At the same time, smallholders and family farmers, livestock keepers, forest dwellers, fishers, and fish farmers represent an important yet unexplored asset for the sustainable use, conservation, restoration and preservation of biodiversity for food and agriculture in the region. When managed

by small-scale food producers, biodiversity can have a high level of heterogeneity embedded within it, thereby improving its adaptive capacity and increase the resilience of ecosystems (FAO, 2021).

The Regional Dialogue

Considering the critical roles of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services for the sustainability of food systems and achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, FAO facilitates, in collaboration with its partners, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other UN organizations, the integration in a structured and coherent manner of actions for the conservation, sustainable use, management and restoration of biological diversity across agricultural sectors at national, regional and international levels.

Against this background, FAO has developed a series of instruments and tools related to biodiversity and that can contribute to the implementation of the FAO Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors, Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, and in alignment with the adaptation agenda of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference, in particular, its Nature Campaign.

The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) is an important player in the region, providing support for countries, accelerating their capacities for the mainstreaming conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity across agricultural sectors. FAO Regional Initiative 3 on sustainable natural resource management under a changing climate is the programmatic umbrella for translating global instruments and specific regional challenges into policies and actions at the country level.

In line with its mandate to coordinate a collective effort to address challenges related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, REU is organising the first Regional Dialogue on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across Agricultural Sectors in Europe and Central Asia.

Objective

To discuss challenges, exchange views and opportunities in addressing ways to mainstream biodiversity across agricultural sectors in Europe and Central Asia, promoting inclusive sustainable and resilient agri-food systems for improved food security and nutrition.

The Regional Dialogue will address the potential for collaborative actions among the different sectors and across countries, and the role of the FAO REU guidance. Moreover, it will engage stakeholders in consultations on the regional Action Plan for the Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors in Eastern European and Central Asia countries.

Target audience

- National government representatives and CBD focal points
- Technical staff from relevant ministries and involved with biodiversity related projects
- Regional experts, academia and researchers on biodiversity for food and agriculture
- Farmers, small scale food producers
- Participants from the private sector and civil society

Structure

The Regional Dialogue will be organized online and will be split into 2 days. The first day will provide an overview of international instruments and the political commitments on mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors in the subregions – the Balkan countries, Eastern Europe,



Caucasus, and Central Asia. The second day will focus on the technical aspects and consultations for the next steps to strengthen the regional process and share knowledge among countries and stakeholders.

Language

The event will be held in English and Russian. Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

AGENDA

16 NOVEMBER MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY ACROSS AGRICULTURAL SECTORS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	
	Moderation: Anna Kanshieva, FAO REU
11:00-11:05	Introductory video
11:05-11:10	Opening remarks Raimund Jehle, Regional Programme Leader for Europe and Central Asia, FAO
11:10-11:15	Introduction Tania Santivanez, Delivery manager, Regional Initiative “Natural resources, biodiversity and climate change”, FAO REU
<i>International policy framework and instruments to mainstreaming biodiversity for food and agriculture</i>	
11:15-11:25	UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: action on biodiversity for food and agriculture Markus Lehmann, Science, Society, and Sustainable Futures Division, CBD Secretariat
11:25-11:35	EU Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies: the path to sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems Andrzej Januszewski, Bilateral & Regional Environmental Cooperation, DG ENV, European Commission
11:35-11:45	Global FAO Strategy and Action Plan on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors Frederic Castell, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO
11:45-11:55	Let's cultivate biodiversity – Growing resilience Didier Bazile, The French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD)
<i>Panel discussion: Challenges and opportunities for biodiversity mainstreaming in Eastern Europe and Central Asia</i>	



11:55-12:15	Challenges in Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors in Eastern Europe and Central Asia Carolina Rizzi Starr, Agricultural Officer, FAO REU	
12:15-12:25	Albania	Prof. Dr Pellumb Abeshi , Agricultural University of Tirana Klodiana Marika , Ministry of Environment
12:25-12:35	Tajikistan	Ubaydullo Akramov , National Centre for Biodiversity and Biosafety, Committee for Environmental Protection Khisrav Shermatov , National Centre for Realization of Environmental Protection Actions, Committee for Environmental Protection
12:35-12:45	Azerbaijan	Rashad Allahverdiyev , Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
12:45-12:55	Turkey	Prof. Dr Alptekin Karagöz , Aksaray University
12:55-13:00	Wrap up and closing remarks of the first day	

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11:00-11:05	First Day Recap Tania Santivanez, Delivery manager, Regional Initiative “Natural resources, biodiversity and climate change”, FAO REU
<i>Biodiversity as an adding value to the agricultural products</i> <i>Moderator: Tania Santivanez</i>	
11:05-11:20	Smallholders, family farmers and small-scale food producers as custodians of biodiversity Mariana Seremet, Gradina Moldovei (Republic of Moldova)
11:20-11:35	Payments for Ecosystem Services: role in small-scale agriculture Marta Arnes Garcia, Consultant on GIAHS and NbS, FAO REU
11:35-11:50	Biodiversity Friend certification: assessing the impact of agriculture in biodiversity Enrico Ruzzier, World Biodiversity Association ONLUS (Italy)
<i>Consultations: Action Plan for the Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors</i> <i>Moderator: Carolina Rizzi Starr</i>	
11:50-12:05	Priorities and key actions for the mainstreaming biodiversity across agricultural sectors in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: foundation for the discussion Anna Kanshieva, Biodiversity Expert, FAO REU
12:05-12:40	Group discussion Facilitators: Carolina Rizzi Starr, Marta ArnesGarcia, Anna Kanshieva, Evetta Zenina, FAO REU-SEC



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12:40-12:50	Plenary
12:50-13:00	Closing remarks Irene Hoffmann, Secretary, FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture