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Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

**Needs and constraints of small farms in
Europe and Central Asia**

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Background

- Farm structures in most of the 18 FAO programme countries in the region are dominated by smallholders and family farms.
 - Support to smallholders and family farms is one of four regional priorities for FAO in Europe and Central Asia.
 - Support is provided through the programmatic umbrella of the "Regional Initiative on Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms for Improved Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction".
 - The Regional Initiative has two main components:
 1. Support policy development and increased sustainable agricultural production
 2. Support improvement of rural livelihood and reduction of rural poverty
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FAO support to implementation of UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDFF) 2019-2028 in Europe and Central Asia

- Global launch of UNDFF in Rome in May 2019.
 - The Decade builds on the success of the International Year of Family Farming of 2014.
 - UNDFF is an excellent opportunity to further enhance support to small farms in partnerships with civil society, governments, international organizations and donors.
 - The FAO support to implementation of UNDFF is being integrated with the Regional Initiative work programme.
 - Need for new and enhanced partnerships with governments, civil society, academia and also the private sector.
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The Global Action Plan of the Decade includes seven pillars of work

- 1) Develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming
 - 2) Support youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming
 - 3) Promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women
 - 4) Strengthen family farmers' organizations and their capacities
 - 5) Improve socio-economic inclusion, resilience and well-being of family farmers, rural households and communities
 - 6) Promote sustainability of family farming for climate-resilient food systems
 - 7) Strengthen the multidimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations contributing to territorial development and food systems
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Smallholders and family farms are key to achieve several of the Sustainable Development Goals

- Family farming produces more than 80 percent of the world's food.
 - Family farming is – both globally and in Europe and Central Asia – essential for achieving several of the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - SDG Target 2.3 on doubling the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers by 2030 is key.
 - To guarantee the success of the UNDRFF as well as of the SDGs, action must be supported by coherent, integrated and cross-sectoral policies, concurrently addressing the environmental, economic and social dimensions of agriculture and rural development.
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FAO smallholder country studies in eight countries

- FAO conducted in 2018 country studies of needs and constraints of smallholders and family farms in eight countries in Europe and Central Asia (Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia and Tajikistan).
- Country Reports and Regional Synthesis Report will be published in the second semester this year.
- The reports provide policy recommendations on supporting the development of small farms.



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Smallholders and small family farms are not a homogeneous group of farms

Need to differentiate support to different groups of small farms

1. Development of commercial family farms (agricultural path)
2. Diversification of the rural economy (e.g. creation of new jobs in processing, agro tourism etc.).
3. Support to vulnerable groups – Leaving no one behind (e.g. social protection measures)



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Regional recommendations to support smallholders and family farms based on the country studies (1/3)

- Strong need to reform and improve agricultural extension service and to strengthen access of small farms.
- Provide capacity development activities specifically tailored to the needs of women farmers.
- Strong need to support diversification of the rural economy and to create new jobs both on and off farm (and address drivers of out migration).
- Need for the inclusion of social protection measures linked with the agriculture and rural development policies to improve rural livelihood and poverty (leaving no one behind).



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Regional recommendations to support smallholders and family farms based on the country studies (2/3)

- To promote integrated community development through a participatory and inclusive approach with tailor-made support to small farms through grant schemes / support measures based on specific needs and priorities in the community (FAO regional technical network in preparation).
- Need for investment support targeting smallholders and family farms in all eight countries.
- To support development of sustainable agricultural production including agro-ecology and organic farming.
- To support smallholders and family farms in adopting to the effects of climate change.

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Regional recommendations to support smallholders and family farms based on the country studies (3/3)

- Need to develop the formal agricultural land markets and address land fragmentation and small farm sizes through integrated land consolidation instruments while considering also access to land for smallholders and youth.
- To encourage cooperation as a path for market integration for smallholders with potential to develop intensification of production.
- To reallocate from direct support to farms to rural development support to encourage broader development of the sector.

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Conclusions and way forward

- Need for more integrated and cross-sectoral approach.
- Support to integrated community development and local rural development is one of ways forward.
- To build on local needs and constraints but also on local opportunities.
- Small farms are not all the same and support needs to be tailored to their development path.



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Thank you very much!

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Links:

- FAO Regional office for Europe and Central Asia:
<http://www.fao.org/europe/en/>
 - FAO REU Smallholder Regional Initiative Website:
<http://www.fao.org/europe/regional-initiatives/smallholders-family-farms/en/>
 - FAO Family Farming Knowledge Platform:
<http://www.fao.org/family-farming/en/>
 - UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028:
<http://www.fao.org/family-farming-decade/en/>
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