



BUILDING RESILIENCE AND STRENGTHENING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY FOR SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

The impact of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic has placed even greater pressure on the country's already fragile agriculture sector. The combination of droughts, a hasty reform and liberalization process, as well as global food price hikes, have resulted in an increase in the number of inhabitants living in a state of food insecurity, in particular in the northeastern part of the country, and led to an exodus of impoverished and resource-poor farmers and pastoralists to cities and urban areas, a factor now understood to have contributed to the ongoing crisis. The increased demand resulting from the ongoing crisis has negatively affected the country's overall agricultural production and productivity, food security and socio-economic stability. There is therefore an urgent need to strengthen sustainable management of natural resources (water, land and soil) to ensure sustainable food production for the wellbeing of the Syrian people.

In this context, the objective of the FAO Smallholder Support Programme (SSP) was for local-level intervention to empower, strengthen the capacities and build the resilience of smallholder farmers, helping them to become self-reliant within the country's agriculture sector.



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WHAT DID THE PROGRAMME DO?

The two key specific objectives of the programme were (i) to provide support allowing vulnerable smallholder farmers and livestock-keepers – women, men and youth – to become productive, efficient and profitable, and (ii) to support these beneficiaries – and their communities as a whole – to access information and become more self-organized and self-aware. The aim was to transform the situation of smallholder farmers, who have been neglected by power structures, and help them to shape a new agricultural system that is demand-driven and based on market value.

In order to achieve this, the programme intervened in four key areas to support the smallholder farming system as the engine of transformative rural development in the Syrian Arab Republic, with a focus on the governorates of Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Deir ez-Zor and Homs. These areas were (i) increasing vulnerable smallholders' access to water information and technology, (ii) increasing their access to market opportunities and revenue through enhanced value chain analysis and tailored interventions, (iii) increasing their access to quality and improved seed and (iv) increasing evidence-based planning by facilitating access to livelihood information and early warning systems.

IMPACT

The impact of the programme was the building of resilience and sustainable food and nutrition security for vulnerable smallholder farmers and livestock-keepers in the Syrian Arab Republic.

KEY FACTS

Latest Approved Budget

EUR 12 341 943

Duration

January 2019-December 2022

Resource Partner

The European Union

Partners

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Food Programme (WFP), ACTED, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), ISDC, Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), Syrian Veterinary Association (SVA), Federation of Syrian Chambers of Agriculture (FSCA), Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Action Against Hunger (AAH), Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR), Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MoLAE)

Beneficiaries

Vulnerable smallholder farmers and livestock-keepers

ACTIVITIES

- More than 800 farming households (4 800 individuals and 20 000 households indirectly) have access to water for irrigation after the rehabilitation of eight channels in the Ar Rastan Homs water irrigation network, which is managed by the local community through the creation of six water users' associations (WUAs).
- The provision of 729 615 kg of maize silage to 2 962 small livestock keepers to improve the nutrition of 4 443 cows, thereby increasing the production rate of milk by 10 to 15 percent for each cow.
- Leading two national artificial insemination (AI) campaigns that reached 20 819 households and resulted in a successful calving rate of 79 percent.
- Leading two seed multiplication campaigns that benefited 633 vulnerable smallholder farmers and contributed to the creation of 78 pioneer farmers.
- Technical support provided to 476 milk and buffalo milk producers to enhance milk productivity and increase profitability and awareness.
- The completion of a three-phase Nabta Programme, an entrepreneurship approach developed by FAO in the Syrian Arab Republic, with the participation of 1 957 young individuals in the design phase and 565 in the business development phase, while support was provided to start up 163 rural micro-enterprises.
- Involvement of 822 farming families in the FAO Farmer field schools/farmer business schools and provision of tools for winter and summer seedling production. 211 of these farmers were also provided with training and tools for compost production. In the first season of each cycle, the seedling producers created the access to their produced vegetable seedling by supplying a total of 5 722 farmers.
- Creation of employment opportunities for 375 households to establish agro-processing units through the provision of training and vouchers. An additional 374 households participating in pre-existing small agribusiness were provided with vouchers allowing them access to production assets.
- Access to capacity-building and vouchers for asset restocking was provided to 1 040 households in the northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic and to 1 230 households in the northeast of the country to support agriculture-based livelihoods.
- Dissemination of early warning information on climate and market-related risks, which include technical advice on risk mitigation and adaptation to 18 400 farmers (direct beneficiaries) and 40 023 farmers (indirect beneficiaries).



Project Title

FAO Syria Smallholder Support Programme (SSP) for Agriculture Transformation

Project Code

FAO: GCP/SYR/023/EC
Donor: NEAR-TS/2018/402-446

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