



Food and Agriculture Organization
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STRENGTHENING POLICY AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES FOR TRANSFORMING AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS IN THE NENA REGION

March 2024

SDGs:



Countries:

Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Project Code:

TCP/RAB/3805

FAO Contribution:

USD 500 000

Duration:

1 January 2022–31 December 2023

Contact Info:

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Implementing Partners

Ministries of Agriculture, Ministries of Trade and Commerce, Ministries and agencies dealing with statistics and data, National Training Academies (public sector), National Schools of Public Policy.

Beneficiaries

Government officials (responsible for agriculture and related policies) from the region, policy leaders (including ministers and other high-level officials) in food security and nutrition, and academic stakeholders.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

The project contributes to cross-cutting priorities of CPFs and other strategic guiding documents of countries in the region, with activities contributing to enhanced capacities of the countries to develop and implement agriculture and related policies through informed and data-driven decision-making. The development of the Food Security and Nutrition Observatory will contribute to priorities at regional level.



BACKGROUND

The Near East and North Africa (NENA) region has a crucial need for capacity development in leadership and decision-making in agriculture, food security and related areas. In order to ensure the state of the art knowledge and skills required, leadership in the region's agriculture sector needed to be strengthened. Before the project, the sector's leaders lacked real time information and analytical capacities, particularly in such specialized areas as climate change mitigation and adaptation for agriculture, water management, soil health, plant production and protection, livestock and fisheries management, and agribusiness. The overall aim of the project was to build capacities in these areas through specifically designed and tailored training for stakeholders at political, senior, middle and junior levels. It would do this in two ways. The first would involve the establishment of the FAO Regional Leadership Academy (RLA), a structure that would collaborate with important agriculture academic, training and research institutions across the NENA region.

The second was to establish a regional Food Security and Nutrition Observatory in order to build analytics and foresight through a specifically designed analytical system and artificial intelligence, and to provide stakeholders with decision-making tools that are dynamic, real-time and data-based.

IMPACT

The project has successfully empowered leaders in sustainable development and resilience in the NENA region by launching the RLA and bringing together high-level participants from across the region. All participants have been introduced to innovative tools and frameworks that will enable them to dissect complex policy issues, fostering innovative and shared solutions to problems faced by the agriculture sectors in their countries.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The project had two planned outputs. The first, that of establishing the RLA, was successfully achieved. The RLA was launched in November 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, at a regional workshop conducted for high-level officials from countries within the NENA region, including Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and United Arab Emirates, with the aim of building a solid network of leaders, and of maintaining continuity through subsequent training events and other activities supported by partner institutions in the region. A partnership was established with the Centre for Resilience and Sustainable Development (CRSD), University of Cambridge, which facilitated training activities at the workshop and collaborated in the development of a training module for programmes in such partner institutions as the National Training Academy, Egypt.

The second output regarded the establishment of the regional Food Security and Nutrition Observatory. This output was partially achieved. A country-level dashboard for the Observatory was created and deployed in Jordan, and reporting systems and web interface were developed for country and subregional versions. The subregional version of the Observatory was being finalized at the time this report was written and was due to be launched in March 2024. The complete version, covering the entire region, will be completed in the next phase.



IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

Project activities were mostly implemented on time, although some delays occurred during the processing of the Letter of Agreement (LoA) for CSRD. Most activities were implemented within the original timeframe of two years and the planned budget. Those activities that were only partially achieved are planned to be completed during a second phase.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

It is recommended that support be given to the development of the Food Security and Nutrition Observatory at regional level. It is further recommended that a solid network be realised among the leaders who attended training at the RLA, and that continuity be maintained through training and other activities, as supported by partner institutions in the region.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The RLA network, with a membership composed of high-level government officials from the NENA region, was established and made operational. Further interventions, including the provision of training, are planned to ensure its sustainability. In terms of collaboration, partnerships have been established with strategic academic partners, such as CSRD, responsible for the design and delivery of regional leadership development training for FAO members, and with the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG), which hosted training and contributed to its coordination. Phase Two of the project is in the pipeline and will build on the outcomes achieved in order to guarantee overall sustainability.

2. Gender equality

The priorities of all targeted beneficiaries (both women and men) were met, as anticipated, and reported in the final report of CSRD. The training provided adhered to principles of inclusion and gender equality: 31.25 percent of trainees at RLA training events were females. In addition, 43 percent of the facilitators and collaborators were females.



3. Environmental sustainability

The project's activities are subject to FAO's Environmental policy and standards.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

Human rights issues were not directly addressed by the project.

5. Technological sustainability

Technological issues were not directly addressed by the project.

6. Economic sustainability

Economic issues were not directly addressed by the project.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ FAO. 2022. *Design Document for Regional Observatory*. July 2022.
- ❑ CSRD. 2023. *CRSD-FAO THRIVE Launch Report*. November 2023.
- ❑ FAO. 2023. *Food Systems Challenges Note*. October 2023.
- ❑ FAO. 2023. "FAO launches THRIVE Academy in Partnership with Centre for Resilience and Sustainable Development at University of Cambridge". FAORNE website, 20 November 2023.
- ❑ FAO. 2023. RLA Video. FAORNE, Egypt, 12 December 2023.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Transformation of agrifood systems through enhanced capacities on agriculture policies and evidence/ data-based decision-making processes		
Outcome	Enhanced leadership capacities and availability of tools for data- and analytics-based decision-making on agriculture, food security and related policies		
	Indicator	Establishment and continuation of RLA and Observatory.	
	Baseline	0	
	End Target	Identified institutional support for sustainable operations of the RLA and Observatory.	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	The FAO RLA was launched in November 2023 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The country-level version of the Observatory was developed and deployed in Jordan. The subregional version was under preparation at the time this report was written.	
Output 1	Establishment of FAO Regional Leadership Academy		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	The RLA is established and becomes operational.	At least three high-level and five mid-junior level training events are designed and delivered.	Partially
Baseline	0		
Comments	One regional leadership capacity development event for Transforming Agrifood Systems was designed and conducted for a number of high-level officials from several countries in the NENA region. More training events are planned to be designed and delivered during the next phase (2024-2026). The design of the training and the establishment of a LOA with the University of Cambridge took longer than planned.		
Activity 1.1	Development (including hiring consultants/experts wherever needed) of collaboration arrangements with the partner institutions in Egypt, UAE, Morocco and other potential partner countries		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An RLA workshop was conducted in Dubai, in collaboration with MBRSG. The training was facilitated by experts from CRSD. Many high-level officials participated from countries in the NENA region, including Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and United Arab Emirates. The plan is to build a solid network with the leaders who attended the training, and to maintain continuity through upcoming training events and other activities, as supported by partner institutions in the region.	
Activity 1.2	Development of RLA webpage and community of practice		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	This activity is planned for the next phase.	
Activity 1.3	Design and delivery of module(s) during the existing training programmes of the partner institutions, such as in the Presidential Leadership Programme of the National Training Academy, Egypt		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The module was designed in collaboration with the University of Cambridge.	
Activity 1.4	Designing the following training for 2022 (topics for 2023 to be finalized in due course, based on feedback of initial training): - Leadership for transforming agrifood systems (targeted at ministerial-level officials) - Managing climate change and adopting climate smart agriculture - Water management in NENA Region - Development of regional food value chains and enhancing intra-regional food trade - Harnessing technologies for agrifood systems transformation - Specific modules to support existing training being delivered by the partner training institutions		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	The design and delivery of Leadership for Transforming Agrifood Systems training was launched in November 2023, to be further applied during the next phase in addition to the development and delivery of the other abovementioned topics. The topic of water management was covered in the November 2023 training event.	
Activity 1.5	Delivery of training, in collaboration with the partner training institutions in Egypt, United Arab Emirates and Morocco; and possibly in some other countries of the region		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The launch of the RLA and training in Regional Leadership for Transforming Agrifood Systems was conducted in collaboration with MBRSG in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. More training will be delivered in the region in collaboration with other institutions such as the Sciences Po, Paris.	

Activity 1.6	Establishment of further partnerships with relevant intra-regional and other academic and research partners		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A partnership was established with CRSD, University of Cambridge. This partnership will be enhanced through more training during the next phase. Also involved as collaborator was MBRSG. During the next phase, collaboration will be extended to other partners.	
Activity 1.7	Preparation of a detailed design document (feasibility and structure) for expansion of the RLA, including the option for a standalone institutional establishment		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	This will be fully developed in the next phase.	
Activity 1.8	Resource mobilization for sustainability of the RLA		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	As a result of delays in the launch of the RLA, this activity will be completed during the next phase.	
Output 2	Establishment of a regional Food Security and Nutrition Observatory		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	The Observatory is established and becomes operational.	Number of periodic and demand-driven reports and analytical material generated through the Observatory. (Number to be identified during the early stage of implementation.)	Partially
Baseline	0		
Comments	A country-level dashboard was developed and deployed in Jordan. The subregional version of the Observatory is being finalized and will be launched in March 2024. The complete version (regional) will be completed in the next phase.		
Activity 2.1	Mapping and acquiring access to all data sources that would be used as input sources in the Observatory		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	This activity was fully achieved and a mapping document was prepared.	
Activity 2.2	Hiring of consultants for designing the input and output system (for data) for the Observatory		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Various consultants were hired to design the system.	
Activity 2.3	Development of demonstration and marketing material for the Observatory		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	This activity was postponed to the next phase.	
Activity 2.4	Hiring of essential staff and basic Information Technology equipment		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	This was not required for this phase and will be carried out during the next phase.	
Activity 2.5	Design of a data analytics system and dashboard to be used as main engine of the Observatory, through procurement of external services		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	This was partially completed through the recruitment of an individual consultant.	
Activity 2.6	Development of reporting systems and web interface for the Observatory (for initial phase)		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Reporting systems and a web interface were developed for the country and subregional versions.	
Activity 2.7	Procurement (for initial phase) of major equipment (servers and computers) and tools (data subscriptions and software) required for the Observatory		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	This was not required during this phase, as a result of delays.	
Activity 2.8	Resource mobilization for the Observatory, particularly for activities 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7		
	Achieved	No	
	Comments	This was not required during this phase, as a result of delays.	

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

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