**United Nations Decade of Family Farming Regional Action Plan for the Near East and North Africa**

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2019-2028 the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDFF). The UNDFF serves as a framework for developing public policies to support family farming worldwide and to contribute significantly to the achievement of the Agenda 2030, by strengthening family farming in order to eradicate rural poverty in all its forms and to address the need for a global food system that provides sufficient, affordable, environmentally sustainable and nutritious food. Through a [Global Action Plan](http://www.fao.org/3/ca4672en/ca4672en.pdf), the UNDFF provides detailed guidance for the international community on collective, coherent and comprehensive actions that can be taken to support family farmers. Designed around seven mutually reinforcing pillars of work, the Global Action Plan recommends a series of interconnected actions from the local to the global level.

The multidimensional nature of family farming, the farm and family, food production and life at home, farm ownership and work, traditional knowledge and innovative farming solutions, the past, present and future are all deeply intertwined. This multi-functionality makes family farming key actors in promoting such a transformative vision of food system, once they are provided with effective support.

FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa region (RNE) has a history of engagement in efforts to strengthen small-scale family farming in the region. Since 2018, it has designed and implemented the three pillars of the [FAO Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7879e.pdf) (RI-SSFF).

To facilitate the implementation of the Decade in the NENA region[[1]](#footnote-1), building on the experience of the RI-SSFF, a UNDFF Regional Action Plan is being developed for the NENA region by FAO RNE, in consultation with strategic partners and relevant stakeholders. This seeks to contribute to a 10-year process in support of SSFF, implementing actions to achieve the UNDFF Global Action Plan (GAP) in the region. FAO RNE is conducting this online consultation in order to gather stakeholders’ perspectives, actions and their expected outcomes at the regional and country levels.

Your experiences and inputs are requested here to contribute to the regional action plan development in the NENA region. The results of the consultation will be presented at a virtual eLaunch event for the UN Decade of Family Farming in the NENA region to take place in the autumn of 2020.

To help us with the subsequent analysis of the consultation’s outcomes, we kindly ask you to address these guiding questions:

Guidance on input:

* Please add to your answers case studies, experiences and information.
* Feel free to choose at least 1-2 question(s) where you can share the most relevant experience, input and expertise. There is no need to address all questions.
* Please try to adopt as much as possible a gender lens when writing your contributions.

**1) Impact of COVID-19 outbreak in NENA region**

The Near East and North Africa (NENA) region is facing key challenges including ending poverty and hunger as well as responding to climate change and the conservation of natural resources to avoid further degradation.

* How does/did the COVID-19 outbreak exacerbate the challenges faced by small-scale family farmers (SSFF)?
* And what are the main areas of interventions that could efficiently build SSFF resilience and ensure sustainable livelihood?
* Can you share success examples in the region?

**2) Sustainable transition towards more sustainable agri-food systems**

In order to meet the needs of a growing population, it is essential to accelerate the transition toward more sustainable food systems with special consideration to the degradation of the already scarce natural resources and climate change impact in the NENA region.

* Can you give brief description of key CC impact factors on productivity of main farming systems in the region?
* How can innovation and digital solutions accelerate such transition of the agi-food systems?
* How can the UNDFF provide tools and measures that help SSFF facing the climate and socioeconomic challenges?

**3) Towards an inclusive and equitable growth**

Improving the productivity and sustainability of small-scale family farmers alone will not be sufficient to achieve the UNDFF milestones or SDG goals in the NENA region. The engagement of adolescents and youth, women and individuals in vulnerable situations such as migrants, will be critical to long term, inclusive and equitable growth.

* Based on your experience, what are effective strategies, instruments or mechanisms to ensure adequate access to services, resources and social protection among marginalized or vulnerable groups, including in humanitarian contexts?
* Despite the informality of the agriculture sector, any support for smallholder family farming can and should go hand in hand with the promotion of the Decent work Agenda. Family farmers are engaged in arduous and sometimes hazardous work to cut costs and compensate for the farm’s low productivity to an extent of involving children too, based on your experience please give three priority actions to enable decent employment for rural smallholders, youth and women and to eliminate child labour in family farming.

**4) Enabling environment for the implementation of UNDFF**

Building an enabling environment for the implementation of UNDFF regional action plan means that there are adequate resources and that governance and institutional arrangements are effective and inclusive.

* How do you define roles of Governments, development agencies, farmers’ organizations, civil society and private sector in implementing the UNDFF in the region?
* What are the bottlenecks –any of the above institutions may encounter in achieving the UNDFF implementation in the region and how to overcome them? E.g. in terms of policies, financial resources, technical capacities, etc.

**5) Partnerships**

Partnerships associated with sustainable development initiatives can create synergies to address interconnected challenges that need to be addressed. With the aim to implement the UNDFF action plan in its seven pillars in the NENA region,

* How can innovative partnerships be built and established? And how/what existing initiatives would you propose to replicate or scale up?

We thank you for your valuable contribution, for more information you may contact RNE-RI-Small-Scale-FFarming-List@fao.org.

*Your RI-SSFF team.*

1. FAO includes the following countries in its NENA region: The Near East sub-region includes Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, as well as Palestine. The North Africa sub-region includes Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. See: http://www.fao.org/3/ca3817en/ca3817en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)