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Organización de las  
Naciones Unidas para la  
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منظمة  
الغذية والزراعة  
للأمم المتحدة

# FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR EUROPE

## Thirty-fourth Session

Rome, Italy, 14–17 May 2024

## FAO results in the region – 2022-2023

### Executive summary

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development defines the context in which the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and its Members have been working towards accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This document presents major results achieved in Europe and Central Asia in 2022–2023, which represents the first biennium under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–31.

It describes changes in the operating environment, in the context of the *four betters*, and the measures FAO has taken to adapt to these changes. This document also contains highlights of the achievements at country, subregional and regional levels, based on the programmatic framework of the three Regional Initiatives, and it maps out the lessons learned from the implementation of the programme.

### Suggested action by the Regional Conference

The Regional Conference is invited to:

- note changes in the operating environment in the context of the *four betters* and the measures that FAO has taken to adapt to these changes;
- acknowledge FAO's work in the region during 2022–2023 and the achievements under the Regional Initiatives, responding to the main priorities identified at the 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (ERC);
- note the progress in implementing FAO's key initiatives and new ways of working in the region in 2022–2023 to contribute to supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- note that FAO fully aligned its country-level planning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework process, thus building on United Nations Development System repositioning efforts to collectively support country ownership and address national SDG priorities and gaps; and

Documents can be consulted at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

- e. note the importance of new innovative and alternative resource partnerships, as well as strengthened partnerships with the private sector and intergovernmental organizations, among others.

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## I. Introduction

1. This document presents major results achieved in Europe and Central Asia during the 2022-2023 biennium, which represents the first biennium under the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31, focusing on the transformation to MORE efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for *better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life*, leaving no one behind.
2. FAO conducts its regional, subregional and country-level work under the Strategic Framework, delivering against its results framework through identified Programme Priority Areas (PPAs). Furthermore, during the biennium, FAO supported Members in the successful implementation of the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031 and the FAO Science and Innovation Strategy, along with their action plans and other thematic strategies.
3. Following the 33rd Session of the Regional Conference for Europe (ERC), held in 2022, FAO focused its response on the regional priorities identified by Members, under the overall umbrella of agrifood systems transformation, through the following Regional Initiatives (RIs):
  - a. RI-1: Empowering smallholders, family farms and youth through inclusive rural transformation, digitalization and innovation
  - b. RI-2: Transforming food systems and facilitating market access and integration
  - c. RI-3: Managing natural resources sustainably and preserving biodiversity in a changing climate
4. The RIs ensure a clear causal results hierarchy through relevant PPAs and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), complemented by elements to focus, accelerate and enable the Organization's work.

## II. Context changes and priority adjustments

5. In 2022–2023, the long-term socioeconomic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic were still perceptible in the region. The war in Ukraine resulted in an evolving humanitarian crisis, increased market instability (including high volatility in energy, food and agricultural input prices), and increased risks and uncertainties for food security and nutrition for the most vulnerable groups.<sup>1</sup>
6. Additional factors in the region continued to affect the transition to sustainable agrifood systems, including climate change, adverse weather events, earthquakes, urbanization, migration and political instability.
7. With reference to the [conclusion of the 33rd Session of the ERC](#)<sup>2</sup> and the request to address the food security impacts of the war in Ukraine, the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia revised its regional work programme in 2022.

### Better Production

8. Crises in the region led to challenges for smallholders and family farms, through increased agricultural input prices, production levels and pressure on producer prices and the shift of existing domestic and export markets.
9. Besides resilience to climate change among smallholders and family farms, emphasis was put on building resilience to shocks and crises, including strengthening local food production, through the development of agricultural land markets, addressing land abandonment and improving farm structures.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, please see document ERC/24/4 Rev.1: FAO's response to the multiple crises in Europe and Central Asia

<sup>2</sup> The Report of the 33rd Session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe is available at <https://www.fao.org/3/nj289en/nj289en.pdf>

## Better Nutrition

10. The war in Ukraine resulted in substantial trade disruptions, impacting markets, value chains and food and agricultural input prices. It also drew attention to the risk implications of high food export and import dependency, and the need for reliable data for evidence-based decision-making.

11. FAO monitored the evolution of food prices and changes in trade policies that affected the flow of food, and supported countries – including Georgia, North Macedonia and Tajikistan – in strengthening their price and market information systems and policy monitoring frameworks.

12. The requirement of countries to diversify their food markets required broader regional market access, in compliance with food standards and importing country requirements. The eighth annual meeting of the Agricultural Trade Expert Network, held in 2022, provided an overview of the main drivers related to the impacts of the war in Ukraine.

## Better Environment

13. Intensive and unsustainable agricultural practices increased in the region, leading to the overuse of natural resources and agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers and pesticides. It is necessary to find alternative production solutions to decrease dependence on the import of agricultural inputs.

14. Enhanced emphasis was placed on technologies and innovations related to soil fertilization, plant nutrition and the effective use of inputs.

## Better Life

Inefficient supply chains created difficulties among the urban and rural poor and vulnerable groups in accessing nutritious and diverse foods. FAO focused on promoting territorial approaches among smallholders and family farmers and empowering women and youth.

FAO scaled up its presence and programmes in the region to respond to crises, providing short-term and medium-term support to assist vulnerable rural households and small- and medium-sized farming households, including through the provision of multipurpose cash and critical agricultural inputs.<sup>3</sup> In Ukraine, more than 570 000 people and more than 15 000 farmers were supported with what they needed to ensure or maintain their production.

FAO supported policymakers in better understanding and addressing the impacts of the war on agriculture and rural households, including via a consultation with government representatives in 2023.

After the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye, FAO extended its assistance in the country and developed the Earthquake Response and Recovery Plan 2023–2026, which aims at supporting around 700 000 people in the affected areas. FAO continued supporting Syrian refugees and host community members in Türkiye, through its implementation of the Syrian Refugee Resilience Plan.

## III. Achievements in the region

### A. Regional priorities and key achievements in 2022–2023

15. The 33rd Session of ERC, held in 2022, endorsed regional priorities for 2022–2023 within the context of the Medium Term Plan 2022–25, as follows:

- a. formulating effective policies, promoting innovation and digitalization, and facilitating rural livelihoods, with emphasis on smallholders, women and youth;
- b. food system transformation, promoting nutrition-sensitive value chains and healthy diets through the alignment of trade, food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary policies, facilitating One Health;

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<sup>3</sup> For more information, please see the document ERC/24/4 Rev.1: FAO's response to the multiple crises in Europe and Central Asia

- c. promoting sustainable natural resources management and facilitating resilience in agriculture, forestry and other land use sectors, including mitigating and adapting to climate change; and
- d. addressing food insecurity and reducing all forms of malnutrition.

16. During the biennium, FAO focused its work on recommendations from the 33rd Session of ERC related to science and innovation, digital solutions, national pathways following the United Nations Food Systems Summit, antimicrobial resistance, mainstreaming biodiversity, nature-based solutions, youth and gender.

17. The RIs, as the main programmatic instruments for aligning the Organization's work with the priorities in the region, were approved by Members at the 33rd Session of the ERC. Food security and nutrition continued to be embedded in the three RIs as an overarching priority.

18. A description of the results in the region is provided below in the context of the RIs and on the overarching priority of addressing food insecurity malnutrition.

### **Regional Initiative 1 (RI-1): Empowering smallholders, family farms and youth through inclusive rural transformation, digitalization and innovation**

19. RI-1 addressed the needs of smallholders and family farmers, including women, youth and vulnerable groups in rural areas, focusing on the development of competitive and commercial smallholders and family farms through enabling policies and innovative practices for sustainable agricultural production, as well as promoting inclusive growth across the region, by improving rural livelihoods and enhancing access to natural resources.

<b>Programme Priority Areas</b>	<b>SDG targets</b>	<b>Regional areas of emphasis</b>
BP1: Innovation for sustainable agriculture production	2.3	Promoting sustainable and innovative production practices for smallholders
BP4: Small-scale producers' equitable access to resources	1.4, 2.3	Promoting capacity development for land consolidation and land banking  Strengthening the capacities of national stakeholders to support smallholders and family farms through inclusive policies <sup>4</sup>
BP5: Digital agriculture	1.4	Developing capacities related to innovative solutions and digital innovations
BE1: Climate change mitigating and adapted agrifood systems	13.1, 13.2	Enhancing smallholder resilience to climate change, shocks and crises
BL2: Inclusive rural transformation	8.3	Promoting territorial approaches to rural development

*Table 1. Relationships between Regional Initiative 1 and the PPAs, SDG targets and areas of emphasis*

#### **Highlights of achievements:**

- a. Sustainable and innovative production practices, including precision agriculture, were promoted in the region. An analysis carried out in Albania and Montenegro identified the primary challenges in feed production and storage. The first farmer field school programme in

<sup>4</sup> During the implementation of the 2022–2023 work programme, it became obvious that there is a need for RI-1 to increase its focus on the policy framework taking advantage of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas and, in particular, strengthening national stakeholders' capacities to support smallholders and family farms. The strengthened capacities contribute to the promotion of investment and grants for smallholders.

the Western Balkans on sustainable farming for dairy farmers was launched in Montenegro in 2023.

- b. FAO prepared a master's course curriculum on land consolidation and land banking, and successfully completed a multipurpose land consolidation programme in North Macedonia, which was presented at the thirteenth and fourteenth regional LANDNET<sup>5</sup> workshops.
- c. A manual on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas in Eastern Europe and Central Asia was prepared and promoted. FAO prepared case studies on family farming in European Union countries, contributed to the development of the Farm Accounting Data Network in Albania, and concluded a study on the future of family farming in Türkiye.
- d. FAO launched its [AgriTech Observatory](#), a virtual platform designed for the navigation of digital agriculture developments in Europe and Central Asia, and supported the development of national strategic documents to mainstream digitalization in the agrifood sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>6</sup>, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan.
- e. FAO further promoted integrated community development through a regional technical network, and presented good practices, policy recommendations and examples of investments and grants for smallholders at regional consultations.
- f. A regional dialogue on the United Nations Decade of Family Farming took stock of the first three years of its implementation. FAO prepared national action plans on family farming in Kyrgyzstan and Republic of Moldova, and launched the preparation of a national action plan in Albania and rural development strategies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, the Organization promoted the EU LEADER methodology in Armenia and integrated community development in Azerbaijan.

### **Regional Initiative 2 (RI-2): Transforming food systems and facilitating market access and integration**

20. RI-2 promotes a holistic approach to improving the health and functioning of agrifood systems, and it contributes to the transformation of these systems through agrifood trade policy, market and value chain development, and the alignment of trade, food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary policies to meet World Trade Organization commitments.

<b>Programme priority areas</b>	<b>SDG targets</b>	<b>Regional areas of emphasis</b>
BP1: Innovation for sustainable agriculture production	2.3, 2.4	Promoting agrifood market development and value addition. Enhancing sanitary and phytosanitary standards
BP3: One Health	3.d	Promoting a One Health approach
BN1: Healthy diets for all	2.1	Supporting agrifood systems transformation. Improving food and nutrition governance.
BN3: Safe food for everyone	2.1	Enhancing food safety
BN4: Reducing food loss and waste	12.3	Reducing food loss and waste, focusing on the retail, hotels, restaurants, catering and consumer levels
BN5: Transparent markets and trade	2.b, 2.c, 17.11	Strengthening agrifood trade policy and market development

*Table 2. Relationships between Regional Initiative 2 and the PPAs, SDG targets and areas of emphasis*

<sup>5</sup> LANDNET is an informal technical network of land tenure professionals in Europe and Central Asia.

<sup>6</sup> All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

***Highlights of achievements:***

- a) FAO produced a regional synthesis report on geographical indications, highlighting the experience in nine countries, and promoted geographical indications in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The Organization also presented best international practices on agrobased clusters,<sup>7</sup> including a pilot in Kyrgyzstan.
- b) Regional dialogues and exchanges of experiences on phytosanitary policies and measures were further facilitated, including an expert network on wheat rust diseases in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and the strengthening of national capacities in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye and Turkmenistan.
- c) FAO continued promoting the One Health approach, including through the [Central Asia Animal Health Network](#) and a One Health pilot against echinococcosis in Kazakhstan. The Organization prepared country reports on antimicrobial use in 12 countries, and national antimicrobial resistance surveillance programmes in Armenia, Belarus and Tajikistan. Additionally, FAO conducted trainings on antimicrobial resistance and One Health challenges and a fish health management training for representatives from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.
- d) To realize the commitments of the United Nations Food Systems Summit, FAO facilitated the implementation of national pathways, developed capacities in Armenia and Tajikistan, and prepared country roadmaps in Albania and Serbia. FAO supported the establishment of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Regional Cooperation Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at the Ministry of Agriculture of Türkiye with the aim of fostering a collaborative environment for addressing agrifood system challenges. Key outputs included the preparation of food systems assessments for each of the 13 BSEC Member States, along with a comprehensive review of the current state of food systems sustainability in the region.
- e) FAO and the World Health Organization prepared a food control system assessment tool, and assessments are ongoing in Azerbaijan, Belarus and Georgia. FAO concluded Codex Trust Fund projects in Azerbaijan and North Macedonia and conducted national food safety trainings in Kyrgyzstan.
- f) For the food loss and waste reduction programme, the regional conference in Istanbul in 2022 brought together stakeholder experts who shared practical examples of food loss and waste reduction across all sectors of the value chains. Furthermore, FAO expanded the regional community of practice, supported the Save Your Food campaign in Türkiye, and formulated national food loss and waste reduction strategies and action plans in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. FAO also applied behavioural science to evaluate food loss and waste solutions in Azerbaijan and Georgia, and supported the development of a law on food loss and waste in Georgia.

**Regional Initiative 3 (RI-3): Managing natural resources sustainably and preserving biodiversity in a changing climate**

21. RI-3 supports Members in strengthening capacities and policy processes to achieve sustainable natural resources management, preserve biodiversity, adapt to and mitigate climate change, reduce disaster risks and transfer to a resilient and sustainable agrifood systems. It assists countries in accessing climate finance, including tools and support for interventions at the nexus of climate change, food security, gender and rural poverty.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on agrobased clusters, please see <https://www.fao.org/3/i1560e/i1560e.pdf>.

Programme priority areas	SDG targets	Regional areas of emphasis
BP1: Innovation for sustainable agriculture production	2.4, 6.4	Promoting green and climate-resilient agricultural practices. Enhancing water policy in Central Asian agrifood systems
BE1: Climate change mitigating and adapted agrifood systems	13.1, 13.2	Promoting nature-based solutions addressing climate change. Enhancing policies to combat climate change
BE2: Bioeconomy for sustainable food and agriculture	12.4, 12.5	Promoting bioeconomy and the sustainable management of agrichemicals
BE3: Biodiversity and ecosystem services for food and agriculture	2.5, 15.3	Mainstreaming biodiversity. Supporting the achievement of land degradation neutrality
BL4: Resilient agrifood systems	1.5	Enhancing disaster risk reduction and resilience

Table 3. Relationships between Regional Initiative 3 and the PPAs, SDG targets and areas of emphasis

### Highlights of achievements:

- a. FAO prepared a regional seed programme and established the regional chapter of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The first regional workshop on farmer rights to seeds was held, and support was provided to Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova. Support on sustainable forest management was provided in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
- b. The 43rd Session of the European Commission on Agriculture<sup>8</sup> highlighted the importance of sustainable use of land and water resources in the region. To enhance water resource management, assessments were conducted in Türkiye on its natural capital and in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on water and soil pollution. Water use associations were supported in Azerbaijan and Türkiye.
- c. FAO supported climate action and climate finance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Turkmenistan. Green Climate Fund readiness projects were concluded in Azerbaijan, North Macedonia, Serbia and Tajikistan. FAO conducted trainings on reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>9</sup> and continued engaging agriculture in nationally determined contributions processes.
- d. FAO prepared reports on promoting bioeconomy and raising awareness on agricultural plastic waste. It also supported pesticide management systems and the development of national action plans in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.
- e. The Organization prepared a regional action plan to mainstream biodiversity in the region, and published guidelines on forest biodiversity monitoring methodologies. It also held a regional workshop on aquatic biodiversity conservation and conducted trainings on livestock impacts on biodiversity in six countries.
- f. FAO prepared an overview of land degradation neutrality in Europe and Central Asia,<sup>10</sup> as well as country profiles on the status of land degradation neutrality. In 2023 the Regional Decision Support System<sup>11</sup> was updated to include additional indicators, mostly encompassing biodiversity aspects.

<sup>8</sup> For more information, please visit <https://www.fao.org/events/detail/43rd-session-of-the-european-commission-on-agriculture/en>.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: <https://unfccc.int/>

<sup>10</sup> This document is available at <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb7986en>.

<sup>11</sup> This tool is available online at <https://projectgeffao.users.earthengine.app/view/reu-ldn-assessment>.



- g. FAO piloted its damage and loss assessment methodology for agriculture and developed a web-based, interactive platform for national and local authorities, institutionalizing it in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia. [The Organization also provided trainings on disaster risk reduction in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.](#)

### **Addressing food insecurity and the reduction of all forms of malnutrition (cross-cutting)**

22. To ensure that everyone has access to sufficient and nutritious food from sustainable, inclusive and resilient agrifood systems, activities to address food security and nutrition were integrated into all three Regional Initiatives.

#### ***Highlights of achievements:***

- a. FAO and the Members of the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems for Europe and Central Asia published the annual *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition*<sup>12</sup> report.
- b. FAO provided technical support to the Economic Cooperation Organization Regional Coordination Centre for Food Security to finalize its regional programme for food security and publish an overview of developments concerning food security and nutrition in Economic Cooperation Organization member countries.
- c. The International Conference on Food Security, held in Uzbekistan in 2023, served as a global multilateral platform to accelerate the efforts to achieve the SDGs in food security.
- d. FAO assisted Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro and Serbia in developing food-system-based dietary guidelines, in line with FAO's methodology and up-to-date scientific evidence. Key diet and nutrition challenges and their underlying causes were analysed and documented for Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan to enhance evidence for the development of food-system-based dietary guidelines.

### ***B. Accelerators, cross-cutting themes and partnerships***

23. Accelerators (innovation, technology, data and complements) were utilized to advance FAO's work while minimizing trade-offs, and cross-cutting themes (gender, youth and inclusion) were integrated to ensure the inclusiveness of the regional work programme.

24. FAO promoted innovations in agrifood systems, in line with the regional Science and Innovation action plan. The high-level conference on transitioning to digital agriculture, held in Azerbaijan, emphasized the crucial role that technological innovation, data and collaborative partnerships can play in enhancing productivity, sustainability and resilience in the agricultural sector.<sup>13</sup> FAO supported innovative approaches, including the digital promotion of farmer businesses in Georgia, e-commerce in the Republic of Moldova, a digital agriculture road map in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and an e-agriculture strategy in Türkiye.

25. Special attention was given to strengthening statistics and data collection, including agricultural censuses and surveys, and the disaggregation of data relevant to people experiencing humanitarian crises and conflicts. The use of qualitative data was considered for understanding the underlying causes of complex issues, such as consumption behaviour and food loss and waste.

26. Support was provided at technical, institutional and policy levels to improve governance and the adoption of a holistic and sustainable agrifood systems approach. FAO strengthened regional and subregional coordination mechanisms and networks in the area of food security and nutrition.

27. FAO developed the regional Gender Action Plan for 2023-2026 to guide gender mainstreaming, and published [country gender assessments](#) for Azerbaijan and the Republic of

<sup>12</sup> Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition:  
<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en?details=CC8608EN>

<sup>13</sup> [Vision for the Future: Transition to Digital Agriculture, Baku, Azerbaijan, 6 May 2022](#)

Moldova, supported measuring women's rights to agricultural land in Albania and North Macedonia, and promoted gender equality and women's entrepreneurship in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan.

28. The Organization engaged young farmers, digital innovators and academia in a discussion on agricultural employment during the World Food Forum in 2022, and organized the first [Rural Youth Forum for Europe and Central Asia](#) in 2023. FAO supported the launch of a young agriculture entrepreneur training course in Albania, and the National Agricultural Olympiad in Georgia.

29. FAO mainstreamed inclusion and the “leave no one behind” principle through support for all vulnerable groups in the rural population, including migrants, child labourers; seasonal agricultural workers, refugees; ethnic minorities and poor; conflict-affected, elderly and disaster-prone communities.

30. The Organization expanded partnerships with the private sector and intergovernmental organizations and, in this regard, it engaged businesses in relevant projects in a strategic and catalytic manner in Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Türkiye, and strengthened collaboration with a number of intergovernmental institutions, such as the Eurasian Economic Commission, the Organization of Turkic States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

31. In 2022–2023, FAO facilitated the fifth, sixth and seventh regular and interactive dialogues of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia. These meetings identified and addressed emerging issues for agrifood systems in Central Asian countries; the high-level discussions promoted sustainable agriculture through integrated natural resources management;<sup>14</sup> underlined the importance of agricultural finance for the sustainable enhancement of agricultural productivity;<sup>15</sup> and identified and addressed emerging issues of agriculture and food security in the context of climate change.<sup>16</sup> The seventh meeting was followed by an international conference titled “Cooperation on Food Security in the context of Climate Change”, where representatives from Central Asian governments, United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, *die Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit* (GIZ) and the Green Climate Fund discussed effective solutions to address climate change adaptation and mitigation on the subregional level, and exchanged views on the prospects for increasing financial resources to assist countries in developing and implementing those solutions.<sup>17</sup>

32. FAO further broadened its dialogue with academia and research institutions at a roundtable discussion in 2022 to identify joint priorities towards a more sustainable food systems transformation.

### ***C. FAO's corporate initiatives and new ways of working***

33. Regional action plans were developed and implemented to guide the implementation of FAO's Science and Innovation Strategy and the FAO Strategy on Climate Change 2022-2031.

34. Tajikistan is the only Hand-in-Hand Initiative-supported country in the region. FAO piloted “twinning” approaches for knowledge exchange and technology transfer among the smart villages of France and the future FAO digital villages in Albania and Kosovo, and between the Republic of Korea and Tajikistan. The Korea Agency of Education, Promotion and Information Service in Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries preselected Tajikistan for the delivery of an official development assistance model for knowledge and technology transfer.

35. In 2022, FAO began rolling out its global 1000 [Digital Village Initiative](#) and it began revitalizing rural areas across the Europe and Central Asia region. The Organization developed a tool

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<sup>14</sup> The Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia on integrated natural resource management for the sustainable development of agriculture was held in Turkmenistan on 1 March 2022.

<sup>15</sup> The Sixth Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia on agricultural finance for the sustainable enhancement of agricultural productivity in Central Asia was held in Uzbekistan on 15 February 2023.

<sup>16</sup> The Seventh Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of Central Asia on cooperation on food security in the context of climate change was held in Turkmenistan on 9 March 2023.

<sup>17</sup> This International Conference in Ashgabat discussed ways to ensure sustainable food systems in the context of climate change. For more information, please visit <https://turkmenistan.un.org/en/226382-international-conference-ashgabat-discusses-ways-ensure-sustainable-food-systems-context>.

to analyse the maturity level of potential villages, using it to assess more than 60 villages across nine countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia. Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan are already piloting digital villages.

36. The regional launch of One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) implementation projects was held in Uzbekistan in 2023. OCOP became operational in Albania (for chestnuts), Tajikistan (for apricots), Türkiye (for figs) and Uzbekistan (for sweet cherries). Additionally, substantial progress was made to start OCOP implementation in Georgia (for specialty wines), Kyrgyzstan (for walnuts) and Republic of Moldova (for table grapes).

37. Since its official launch in 2022, the online [Regional Technical Platform on Green Agriculture](#) has bridged gaps in science, policy and digital communication and catalysed the transfer of knowledge and good practices within and among regions. In collaboration with the *Sant'Anna* Institute in Italy, a literature review of around 3 000 papers on green agriculture and a position paper on the same subject was conducted. A total of 30 blogs and 70 thematic publications were released on the platform, along with the development of a green practices repository. Finally, a number of technical webinars were held.

#### IV. One FAO

38. The FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia has been strengthening results-based management processes in the region through the development of systems, skills and templates – all of which contribute towards more effective and efficient monitoring of the performance of FAO's programmes and projects, and improved evidence-based reporting.

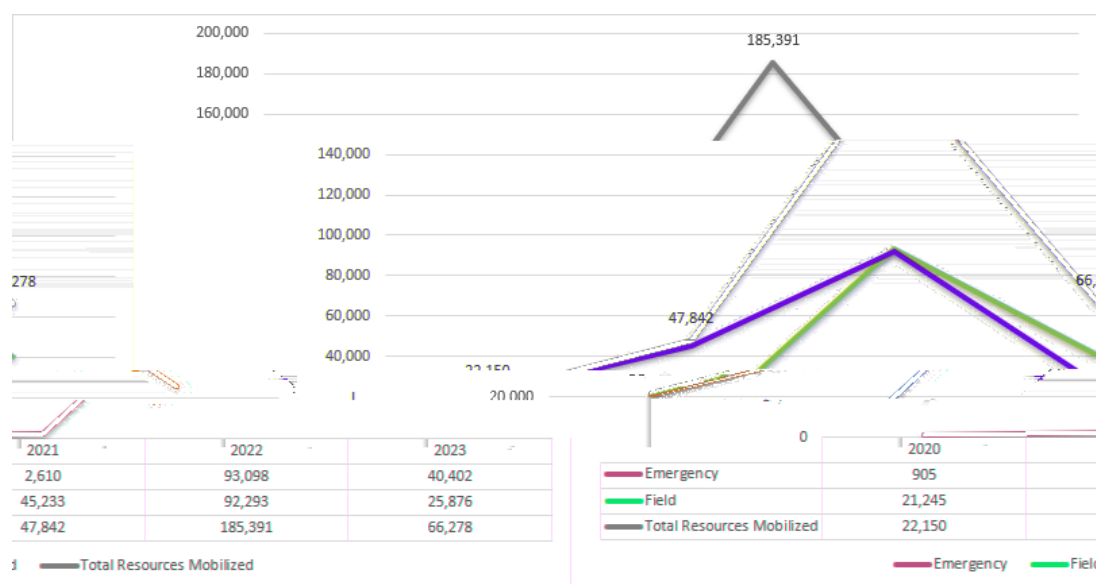
39. During 2022–2023, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia implemented a results-based management action plan based on assessments of internal capacities of monitoring and evaluation in the 16 programme countries of the region. FAO increased results-based management capacities and introduced improved tools for monitoring beneficiaries, indicators and results, in cooperation with the FAO Project Support Division.

40. Europe and Central Asia became one of the pilot regions for the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), previously known as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, within the framework of the United Nations reform, with 12 countries now following the first generation of the UNSDCF cycle.

41. All FAO Country Offices are actively engaged in key strategic processes at the United Nations Country Team level, contributing to the joint outcome and output indicators, together with other United Nations agencies, and ensuring that the critical issues of food security and food systems transformation are adequately reflected in the United Nations Common Country Analysis update documents.

42. During the 2022–2023 biennium, the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia explored a wide range of new innovative and alternative resource partnerships, mobilizing a record USD 251.7 million (USD 185.4 million in 2022 and USD 66.3 million in 2023), about half of which was for emergency projects, mainly in Ukraine. This was a significant increase from the USD 70 million mobilized in the 2020–2021 biennium (USD 22.2 million in 2020 and USD 47.8 million in 2021). In 2022–2023, Canada, Japan, Germany and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs contributed 82 percent of the total resources mobilized for emergency projects, while the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and the European Union accounted for 77 percent of the biennium development portfolio.

Figure 1. Resource mobilization in Europe and Central Asia, 2020–2023



## V. Gaps and lessons learned

43. This section presents gaps in addressing the priorities and lessons learned from the implementation of FAO's programmes in the region, including implications for future priorities:

- a. The RIs have been a good basis for facilitating intersectoral dialogue and linking up with external processes, further strengthened with the revision of theory of change, considering the challenges and opportunities of the new biennium, as well as the revised regional priorities. The RIs have served as a programmatic umbrella, facilitating holistic approaches, responding to regional priorities and achieving greater impact at country level.
- b. Cooperation among the United Nations agencies in the region was enhanced through the Regional Tripartite One Health Group, the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems, the FAO-IFAD Joint Secretariat of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, and the collaboration on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.
- c. The importance of partnerships should be further strengthened, including with smallholder producers and food companies, procurers and consumers.
- d. The promotion of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in all activities across the region should be further strengthened by generating sex-disaggregated data and by interweaving regional policies with the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition.
- e. FAO should fully align with and integrate the Rural Youth Action Plan and embrace the policy recommendations for youth engagement developed by the Committee on World Food Security.
- f. The commitment of countries and United Nations organizations to respond to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has triggered a strong demand for further support to SDG nationalization processes in the region.
- g. Besides the still-perceptible socioeconomic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine has resulted in an evolving humanitarian crisis. The issues of particular concern are mainly of a socioeconomic nature, with risks for food security and nutrition among the most vulnerable groups.