

Regional Consultation Workshop – Smallholders and Family Farms

TCP/RER/3601 - Support to the implementation of the Regional Initiative on Empowering Smallholders and Family Farms

13 – 14 March 2018, Budapest, Hungary

Venue: Hotel Mercure Budapest Buda

Language of the Workshop: English and Russian

Concept Note and Programme

As a result mainly of the land reforms of the 1990s, Europe and Central Asia is largely a region of smallholders and family farms, but few countries have maintained their farm structures dominated by large-scale corporate farms, while a third group of countries have dualistic farm structures with few large corporate farms and many subsistence and semi-commercial family farms hampered by land fragmentation and other development constraints. While smallholders and family farms are important for regional food security, a large number of smallholders are not economically viable and, in most countries, rural populations are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. In fact, in the region more than 60% of the poor live in rural areas.

Based on the country needs and the regional and sub-regional challenges, FAO has four main regional priorities, which were endorsed by the FAO European Regional Conference (ERC) in 2014 and confirmed in 2016 for the medium term period 2018-21. One of the priorities is on *Formulating effective policies for sustainable and inclusive growth for farmers and the rural population with emphasis on smallholders and family farms*.

For the implementation of the regional priority, the FAO *Regional Initiative on Smallholders and Family Farms for Improved Livelihood and Poverty Reduction* was launched in 2014 building on the legacy of the UN International Year of Family Farming.

Moreover, the adoption of the complex Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 – specifically SDG Target 2.3 on doubling agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers and family farmers - reinforce the need to better understand the specific needs of smallholders and family farms and to support their development both at country and regional level.

In order to build an inclusive knowledge base, thus respond effectively to the needs, challenges and constraints for smallholders and family farmers and increase the impact to the greatest extent, FAO has within the framework of a regional project (TCP/RER/3601) conducted country studies on the needs and constraints of smallholders and family farms in Albania, Armenia, FYR Macedonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan.

The objective of the workshop is to:

- (i) present the main conclusions and recommendations of the seven country studies prepared on smallholders and family farms, as background for discussion;
- (ii) present the draft regional synthesis report;
- (iii) ensure linkages among representatives of governmental institutions, FAO technical experts and FAO country office representatives to exchange experience, information and to support each other in the common goal of supporting smallholders and family farms in the region; and
- (iv) discuss enhanced FAO support to smallholders and family farms in the region under the programmatic umbrella of the Regional Initiative and in light of the Decade of Family Farming 2019-28.

The participants of the workshop will include representatives of Ministries of Agriculture and relevant line ministries from the seven study countries, FAO technical experts, FAO country office representatives from the seven countries, relevant regional civil society organizations as well as donors and other international organizations.

As a result, the workshop is expected to contribute to further develop the support provided by FAO to smallholders and family farms in the region based on the FAO comparative advantage as well as on country needs. It will allow to increase further the coherence of the regional work with the countries and increase also the synergies and impact both at national and regional level.