



COVID-19 response and digitalization in Europe and Central Asia

FAO webinar

27 May 2021 - 10:00-12:00 CEST

Background

While the application of digital technologies in agriculture started well before COVID-19, the pandemic-triggered digitalization projects require fine-tuning and careful adaptation. Agriculture is a complex cross-faceted multidisciplinary domain, different from other sectors of economy.

There are multiple challenges to successful digitalization in this sector, for example, ICT infrastructure, lack of national policies, duplication of efforts, lack of capacity, etc. Innovative approaches were found in various sectors of agri-food systems, such as e-commerce platforms, e-payments, precision agriculture and artificial intelligence. These activities are driven by a variety of stakeholders using diverse technologies.

Purpose

The webinar on COVID-19 Response and digitalization aims to present a number of technologies out of the wide digital agriculture range, their interconnectivity and potential benefits, as well as challenges to practical implementation during the pandemic.

This webinar will help identify the regional trends in agriculture during the pandemic, share the experience of various stakeholders advancing on the digital rural transformation path and building resilience when faced with a crisis.

Digitalization is embedded in the programme of work of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, which is reflected in several Regional Initiatives (RI):

- Empowering smallholders, family farms and youth, facilitating rural livelihoods and poverty reduction (RI1)
- Transforming food systems and facilitating market access and integration (RI2); and
- Managing natural resources sustainability, and preserving biodiversity in a changing climate (RI3).

The webinar will show how digitalization can be a game changer for these three initiatives.

Target audience

The event is targeted at government representatives from Europe and Central Asia (i.e. Ministers of Agriculture, Environment, Economy, Health, Social Affairs and relevant technical staff from the Ministries); UN staff; academia, CSOs and private sector engaged in digital transformation of the agriculture sector, farmers, producers' organizations, general public interested in digital transformation.

The webinar will be divided in three parts:

Opening

- 1. Regional digitalization trends**
 - Challenge of connectivity in the region (ITU)
 - Technologies contributing to accelerated rural digital transformation in the wake of COVID-19 (SES)
- 2. Digitalization related to FAO's Regional Initiatives**
 - Good practices of sustaining agriculture in EU during the pandemic through digitalization (EU SmartAgriHubs)



- E-trade mechanisms (UNECE)
- Crop monitoring / Price prediction mechanisms (GEOGLAM)
- Weather monitoring and climate services (WMO)
- Digital skills for farmers (UNDP)
- 3. *Panel discussion on COVID-19 response through digitalization***
- Representatives of different agriculture sectors (UN, government, private, academia, civil society)

Closing remarks

Duration: 120 minutes

The event will be streamed live on [YouTube](#) in English and can be also followed on [Zoom](#) in English and Russian.