



European  
Commission

# EU Achievements in Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture

2014-2018

*International  
Cooperation and  
Development*



# ABOUT

The EU is strongly committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger)<sup>1</sup> and has been working with partners to collectively step up support to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

As reaffirmed in the EU Consensus on Development, agricultural and rural development are key to reducing poverty, boosting food and nutrition security, stimulating economic growth and protecting the environment, all within the context of climate change. They can also play a major role in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls. This booklet describes how the EU is supporting countries and institutions to address numerous challenges and seize opportunities to further their development.

<sup>1</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

# Why focus on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture?

Widespread rural poverty (mostly concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia)<sup>2</sup>, rooted in low agriculture-based incomes and poor public services, increases the vulnerability of individuals, communities and countries to economic downturns, climatic effects and conflicts, resource degradation and population growth, and is strongly correlated with food insecurity and malnutrition. Indicators of food insecurity and malnutrition have generally worsened in the past couple of years.<sup>3</sup>

Food systems need to change to deliver adequate nutrition outcomes for all. Smallholder agriculture and agribusinesses, with their multiple economic linkages, should

be the engines of growth and employment creation, raising incomes and increasing resilience. The opportunities are already there. However, in most developing countries this potential is far from being met. While sustainable farming is becoming technically more feasible, with beneficial effects on resource use and food quality, agriculture has to innovate significantly to make this a reality.

Unleashing the potential of the rural economy is not only a national imperative for individual countries, but also an international one, as it will facilitate more sustainable resource use, contribute to reduced poverty and global stability, and reduce migratory pressures.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, 2018. *Poverty and Shared Prosperity – Piecing together the poverty puzzle*.

<sup>3</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2018. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018 – Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition*. Rome, FAO.



# How is the EU addressing these challenges?

The EU, working jointly with its Member States, is taking a comprehensive approach to supporting partner countries' own policies and programmes to eradicate poverty, hunger and malnutrition, based on EU strengths and comparative advantages.

The EU has focused on four priorities for addressing the challenges of food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture. These are: (i) enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable to food crises, to build sustainable and resilient societies; (ii) fostering specific nutrition outcomes,

to secure health and wellbeing for present and future generations; (iii) increasing responsible investments in agriculture and food systems, to foster inclusive and equitable economic transformations that will assure jobs and growth, particularly for younger generations; and (iv) stimulating innovations for sustainable agri-food systems, to produce more and better food against the background of climate change, while preserving natural resources and biodiversity for future generations. Strengthening sector governance, addressing climate change and promoting gender equality have been integral concepts in all four areas.

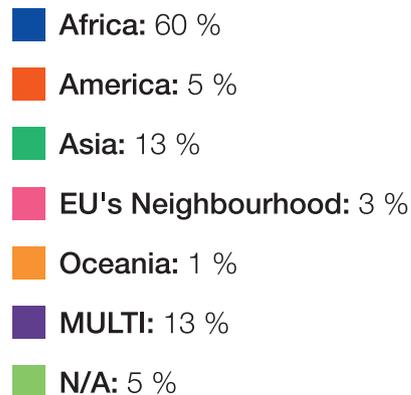
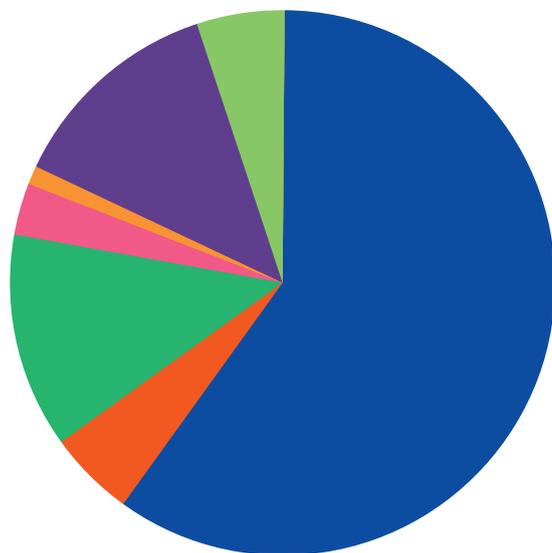


## EU support at a glance

During the current EU Financial Framework (2014-2020) 61 countries selected food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture as a priority sector for partnering with the EU. In support of this massive call for action **the EU has committed more than €8.8 billion to this intervention, corresponding to 20 % of the EU development portfolio.**

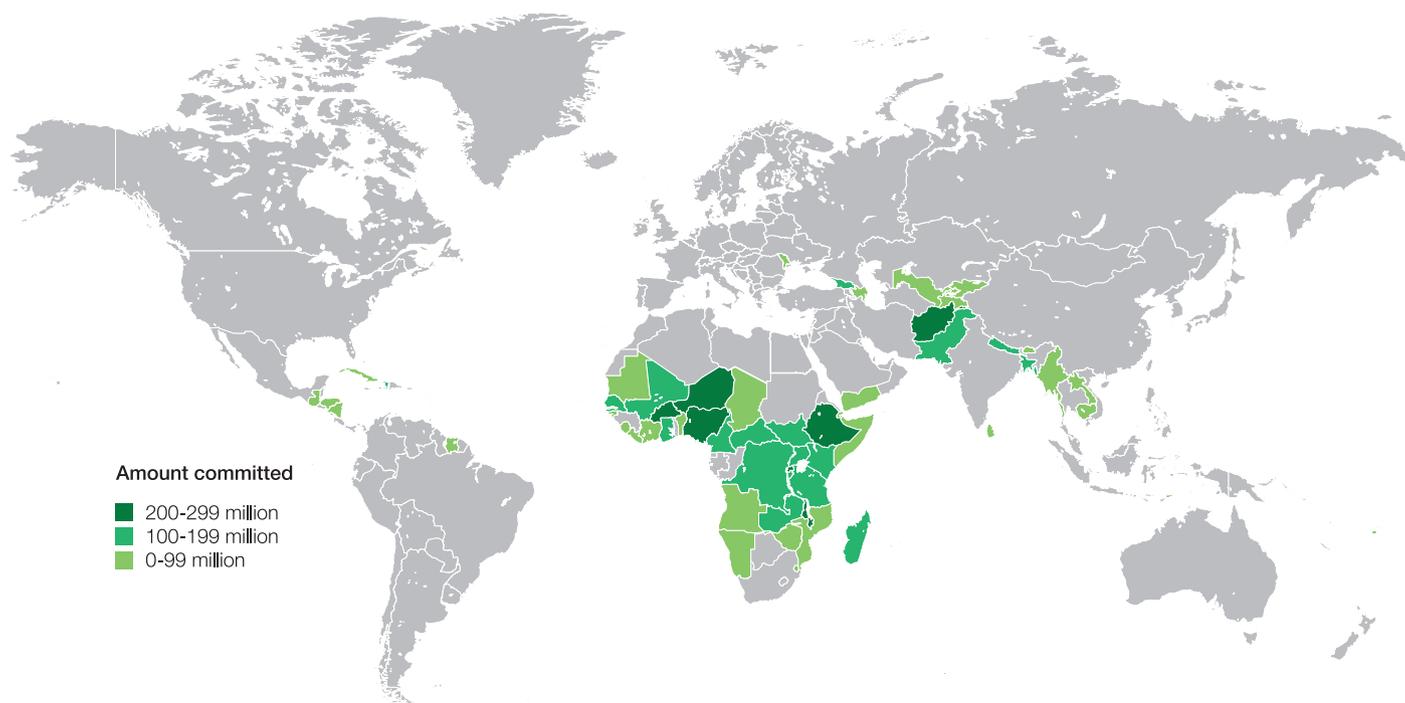
Most of the support – 60 % of the total – is being directed to Africa, followed by Asia (13 %).

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Public institutions are the main partners in terms of budget allocation. These include governments (central and local) and other public entities in donor and recipient countries, which are being supported through targeted actions, as well as through contributions to State budgets dedicated to specific sectors such as agriculture. NGOs play an important role in terms of the number of contracts implemented, while multilateral organisations implement fewer contracts but with more funds.

Sector budget support has been the preferred approach in 20 countries. The distribution of sector budget support commitments by region shows a significant concentration in West Africa, followed by Central Africa. This approach has been very effective in supporting partner countries to carry out institutional reforms and build coherence and synergies among different sectoral policies, including, for example, policies on economic growth, agriculture, food security, nutrition, climate change, environment, territorial development and gender equality.



# What has been achieved?

The EU, with its Member States, has made a significant contribution to improving global food security governance through the scale of its funding, advocacy and championing of key governance issues. For example by strengthening governance mechanisms (reform of the World Committee on Food Security); strengthening regional governmental frameworks such as the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Partnership (CAADP); supporting multi-stakeholders' participation and dialogue (the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, and the International Land Coalition initiative); supporting the generation of information for decision-making (Food Security Information Network and the Food Security Portal); strengthening globally coordinated knowledge and policy processes needed to support resilience programming, through the INFORMED and FIRST programmes and the Global Network on Food Crises; promoting the development of norms, principles and standards (the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests – VGGT – and the CFS Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment – RAI); supporting the generation and delivery of global public goods in the field of research and innovation; and strengthening capacities in different areas.

At the country level the EU has been an active player on policy dialogue, and has supported actions to improve the effectiveness of policies, strengthen sector governance, and improve the lives of millions of beneficiaries worldwide, particularly those most in need of support.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls have gained traction in EU interventions. **Support to gender-responsive actions in sustainable agriculture, rural development, and food and nutrition security has risen from about 37 % in 2014 to 57 % in 2018.** In particular, the EU supports gender-transformative approaches in rural development, challenging gender power imbalances. Initiatives include providing rural women with a platform and a voice to demand their rights; increasing rural women's access to productive resources and employment opportunities to help unleash their economic potential; and engaging both men and women in activities that stimulate positive behaviour changes such as more equitable sharing of unpaid domestic work, strengthened joint decision-making, or reduced gender-based violence.

Some key examples of achievements at the global, national and local levels are highlighted in this booklet.



## Enhancing the resilience of the most vulnerable to food crises

The EU has stepped up its support for efforts to enhance the resilience of households and rural communities to food crises by investing in their agriculture-based livelihoods, in disaster preparedness and in systems to assist vulnerable population groups in a timely manner, for example, through social transfers.

At the global level, the EU, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), has promoted better coordination of analyses and actions through the launch of the Global Network on Food Crises and the annual publication of the Global Report on Food Crises, which provides an update and perspective analysis on food crises, country by country.

To date, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa programmes have provided 5.5 million people with basic social services and almost 170 000 jobs have been created.<sup>5</sup>

At the regional level, the EU has provided coordinated support for improving national and regional policies and plans in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, through the *Alliance Globale pour l'Initiative Résilience* (AGIR) and *Supporting the Horn of Africa's Resilience* (SHARE), respectively.

To address the root causes of migration and to provide stability, the EU and its Member States have set up the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The Fund is supporting initiatives in 26 countries in the Sahel and Lake Chad, North Africa and Horn of Africa which, in addition to addressing migration management, human rights protection and conflict prevention, aim to strengthen the resilience of, and create economic opportunities for, vulnerable people and communities.

EU development assistance has helped around 26 million food-insecure people through social transfers or livelihood support, which has made more communities more resilient to food crises.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Data from EU-funded interventions completed between 2013 and 2018 and from a sample of interventions that were ongoing in 2018. The last reporting exercise in 2018 covered around 1 400 interventions that started since 2014; final figures will be published in the forthcoming "Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions".

<sup>5</sup> EUTF Internal monitoring system – February 2019.

The EU has cooperated with numerous partner countries to strengthen resilience to food crises at the household and community levels. Two outstanding examples are Niger and Ethiopia.

With EU support and **Niger's** strong commitment to combating hunger and poverty, its overall governance structure for food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture policies has advanced significantly in recent years. This has been achieved despite the complex institutional environment, the limited availability of skilled human resources in public administration and scarce financial resources. It has translated into major achievements in terms of sector governance (sector policies, food crises management, land planning, credit facility schemes, rural advisory services), service delivery (support to smallholder farmers, delivery of agricultural inputs, disaster prevention and mitigation) and increased food security. For example, **people considered as being in a situation of food security increased from 31 % in 2013 to 58 % in 2018 while the number of people at risk of food insecurity declined from 46 % in 2013 to 29 % in 2018.**

The Resilience Building and Creation of Economic Opportunities in **Ethiopia** (RESET II) programme has reached 1 893 034 people, half of whom were women. In 2017, the programme **offered nutrition-related services and support to 167 000 adults and children and provided improved animal health support to more than 100 000 households. Women made up 68 % of 3 300 community members who received improved**

**livestock inputs** and 80 % of 600 community members who were helped to start income-generating activities. **The programme reached 6 470 households with farm inputs and services (such as improved seeds and advisory services) and more than 12 000 community members were involved in natural resource conservation activities.**

RESET II uses a range of gender-transformative approaches to tackle the underlying causes of gender inequalities. **From reducing women's workloads and improving household health and nutrition, through to strengthening their skills and asset base, supporting livelihood development diversification and amplifying women's voices as members and leaders of groups**, these approaches are having a profound impact on women's empowerment and on the quality of the lives of all household members. **In some clusters, such as Wolaita, extremely poor women have moved from a position of dependency to one of self-reliance. Previously they were extremely vulnerable, with no assets, and were entirely dependent on the Productive Safety Net Programme; now they have a modest asset base and participate in small-scale income-generating activities.**<sup>6</sup> There is evidence that, by stimulating local economic activity and improving service provision, RESET II has discouraged some young people from migrating and has encouraged others to return.

<sup>6</sup> EU – Results of Gender Self-Assessment Conducted by Implementing Partners, Reset II – March 2019.

## Fostering specific nutrition outcomes

The EU is actively working to reduce under-nutrition by enhancing mobilisation and political commitment. It has been one of the key leaders in global efforts to tackle malnutrition; for example, by supporting the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, which has been instrumental in highlighting the need to address under-nutrition and reduce stunting, and in drawing attention to the importance of the 1 000-day window for action on maternal and child nutrition. The EU has been supporting the SUN movement since the beginning and has been promoting multisector coordination and joint programming in a number of countries.

At the national level the EU follows a country-specific multisectoral approach, focusing on scaling up nutrition-relevant investments, enhancing knowledge for nutrition and

facilitating policy dialogue. Concurrently, the EU is actively engaging with the private sector to improve food systems for better nutrition through food fortification. National Information Platforms for Nutrition have been set up in 10 countries with a particularly high stunting burden to improve accountability and knowledge, assess investments and better inform national governments.

The EU has pledged €3.5 billion to nutrition by 2020 to reduce the number of stunted children (low height for age) in partner countries by at least 7 million by 2025. In 2014-2017, nearly €2.5 billion was committed to nutrition-related actions. Support has been provided to national action plans for nutrition as well as capacity development.

**In 40 partner countries prioritising nutrition, the prevalence of stunting has decreased from 39.57 % in 2012 to 35.82 % in 2017. The number of children who avoided stunting has increased from an estimated 1 million in 2016 to a projected 4.7 million in 2018.**<sup>8</sup> Outstanding examples have been seen in Lao PDR and Kenya.

Almost 18 million women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and children under 5 have been reached by nutrition-related interventions supported by the EU.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Data from EU-funded interventions completed between 2013 and 2018 and from a sample of interventions that were ongoing in 2018. The last reporting exercise in 2018 covered around 1 400 interventions that started since 2014; final figures will be published in the forthcoming "Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions".

<sup>8</sup> As calculated by the European Commission, using a methodology agreed with WHO, based on data presented in the Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition (<http://www.who.int/nutgrowthdb/estimates/en/>).



The EU's flagship "Partnership for Improved Nutrition in **Lao PDR**" is the largest nutrition programme in the country. Multisector coordination is now being spread to lower levels of government, with the establishment of 18 provincial nutrition committees and 50 district nutrition committees. The EU and its partners are supporting 330 villages across 13 districts in 4 provinces in northern Laos where there was previously no coverage. Progress in reducing stunting rates has been remarkable, with **national rates coming down by 11 % over the five years** that the EU has been providing assistance to the nutrition sector. The success in Laos has been achieved through partnership working with France, Germany and Switzerland within the EU's joint programming framework 2016-2020 involving seven Member States and Switzerland.

Thanks in part to substantial investments by the EU, macro-indicators for **Kenya** have improved in recent years and there has been a substantial reduction in stunting and wasting. **Over a five-year period (2009-2014), stunting fell from 35 % to 26 % and wasting from 7 % to 4 %**. Through programmes such as 'Improving maternal and young child nutrition for under-5s and women of productive age in Mombasa county', a number of key results have been achieved: **70 721 adolescent and women of reproductive age were able to access nutritional services; 42 469 youths were reached through nutritional services and programmes; 80 238 children under 5 received nutritional services; and 25 131 men and fathers of reproductive age were reached through nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions.**

Also, in **Ethiopia**, the EU, together with seven Member States, has helped integrate nutrition into the second phase of the Agricultural Growth Programme. Linking nutrition and agriculture is a key change brought about by EU support and a strong policy dialogue on both sides.

In **Nepal**, there has been effective policy dialogue between the EU and the government on the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan. The EU has provided support for the plan's strategic orientation and in setting out a more multisectoral approach to tackling malnutrition. Nepal has achieved international recognition for its government's commitment to approaching the challenge of nutrition via a comprehensive framework for investment, addressing both the immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition.

# Increasing responsible investments in agriculture and food systems



The EU is convinced that accelerated levels of responsible investments – domestic and international, public and private – in agriculture and agri-businesses need to be achieved to create the required dynamics for sustainable growth and resilience across the rural areas of developing countries. Consistent with this approach, in September 2018, President Jean-Claude Juncker announced the new Africa–Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs.

Private sector investments need to be stimulated by creating a well-regulated and serviced business environment; the public sector has a key role to play in achieving this. However, elevated risk levels, linked to production, financing and market risks, remain key constraints to stepping up private sector investments. The EU helps reduce such risks through the European External Investment Plan (EIP): the plan uses tools such as guaranteeing contracts with financing institutions, agri-blending to support investment funds (for example, AgriFI managed by the European Development Finance Institutions Management Company; the Agro-Business Capital Fund managed by IFAD; and several initiatives at the country level), and technical assistance to strengthen the technical and business capacities of smallholder producers and micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) across agricultural value chains.<sup>9</sup>

For example, the EIP will enable European Development Finance Institutions and the African Development Bank **to create 81 500 new jobs directly and 244 500**

**job opportunities indirectly in Africa, with a special focus on youth and women. Nearly 40 000 MSMEs will receive funding assistance, and almost 2 000 will strengthen their financial literacy. Over a dozen local financial institutions will be able to improve their lending capacity. Local MSMEs will become more resilient and many potential growth candidates will be able to start scaling up their businesses.**

Inclusive growth and job creation in **Colombia** are being successfully achieved through a mix of complementary interventions, including sector budget support and projects. So far, **119 488 families, including 14 580 belonging to ethnic groups, have gained access to land; 37 193 parcels of land covering 994 972 hectares (ha) have been legalised, benefiting 55 715 families (half of which are women-headed households); 135 557 peasant families have been supported with productive projects aimed at increasing incomes and job creation (32 % women-headed households); and 54 590 families are in receipt of a home (26 % women-headed households).**

<sup>9</sup> The EU has developed and is using a specific tool to assess value chain inclusiveness and sustainability, covering economic, social and environmental dimensions.

With the help of EU funding more than 800 000 women and men have achieved worldwide secure tenure of land.<sup>11</sup>

The Yield Investment Fund in **Uganda** is offering finance opportunities to small and growing agri-businesses. **In less than 2 years 4 730 smallholder farmers have had access to international markets. The additional investments leveraged from the Yield Investment Fund total €10.7 million, matching the €10 million invested by the EU.**

The EU is supporting farmers' organisations. Through the Farmers' Africa Programme, the **EU has helped build capacities within the Pan African Farmers' Organization, which comprises 5 African regional farmers' organisations and their 68 national members in 49 countries, and represents over 52 million small farmers, of whom more than 26 million are women. Based on this success, a similar programme is supported in South-East Asia where about 250 000 farmers (of whom 150,000 were women) were supported in 2015-2018.**

Since 2014, more than 3 million smallholder farmers have been reached with EU-supported interventions aimed at increasing their sustainable production, access to markets and/or security of land.<sup>10</sup>

Investments must respect the principles of responsible business conduct, as set out in the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) and in the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT). The VGGT are the fundamental tool to secure access, rights, and use of land for men and women, crucial for ensuring sustainable development, food security and a vibrant agricultural sector in support of inclusive socio-economic development. **The EU has been committed to applying the VGGT guidelines in 40 countries with specific country programmes** and has supported the preparation of technical guides, manuals and capacity development products that facilitate the use of the VGGT. **More than 200 000 'land governance stakeholders' have benefitted from the various products**, which are accessible at the FAO VGGT webpage.

For example, in **Namibia, 85 % (162 862) of eligible land rights have been mapped and digitalised, of which 101 121 land rights have been fully registered. Remarkably, in a traditionally patriarchal region, 40 % of the land rights were registered in the name of women.**

<sup>10</sup> Data from EU-funded interventions completed between 2017 and 2018 and from a sample of interventions that were ongoing in 2018. The last reporting exercise in 2018 covered around 1 400 interventions that started since 2014; final figures will be published in the forthcoming "Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions".

<sup>11</sup> EU-funded interventions that ended between mid-2013 and mid-2017 contributed to this result.

## Stimulating innovations for sustainable agri-food systems

EU funding for research, extension and innovation has led to hundreds of innovations among smallholder farmers, increasing their productivity and climate resilience, through the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. Moreover, the EU has contributed to the strengthening of agricultural innovation systems in more than 40 countries, allowing for faster uptake of innovations in the near future.

The EU has stepped up its efforts to make its actions climate relevant. **The average annual share of climate-relevant actions in the field of food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture jumped from 13 %<sup>12</sup> in the 2007-2013 programming cycle to 38 % in 2014-2017, with a significant leap to 47 % in 2016 and 63 % in 2017.**

With the EU support more than 3.8 million smallholder farmers were assisted by rural advisory services.<sup>13</sup>

EU support has contributed to the introduction of sustainable land management practices in more than 4 million hectares of land in agricultural and pastoral ecosystems.<sup>14</sup>

Since 2017 the EU has promoted the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) initiative in partner countries to better link research and innovation with country programmes for a climate-relevant transformation of agriculture and food systems. The EU **pledged €270 million at “The One Planet Summit” in Paris in 2017 to support DeSIRA’s implementation starting with more than 20 countries in Africa and Latin America.**

Applying sustainable agricultural practices has produced important results as demonstrated by EU-funded projects in Burkina Faso and Tajikistan, and in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania, as well as at the global level.

<sup>12</sup> Based on commitments: for a given programme, the share of spending marked as climate and environment relevant is considered as 100 % if a Rio marker is the main objective of the intervention and 40 % if it is a significant but not the main objective. If the intervention has no Rio marker as one of its objectives, its share of climate and environment relevant spending is 0 %.

<sup>13</sup> EU-funded interventions that ended between mid-2013 and mid-2017 contributed to this result.

<sup>14</sup> Data from EU-funded interventions completed between 2013 and 2017 and provisional data from ongoing projects collected in 2018. This last reporting exercise covered around 1 400 interventions that started since 2014; final figures will be published in the forthcoming “Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union’s instruments for financing external actions”.

In **Burkina Faso**, the 'Food and nutritional security, sustainable agriculture and resilience programme' is a **multisectoral programme whose agricultural component directly supports 1 450 smallholder families in 30 communes and indirectly supports up to 688 000 people in the Mouhoun and Nayala provinces.**

In Tajikistan, a €15.6 million administration agreement with the World Bank **supports Integrated Water Resources Management over an area encompassing 38 000 ha of arable land and a population of more than 360 000 people.** It includes institutional strengthening at a national level as well as local work with Water User Associations in three districts of northern Tajikistan.

A programme for addressing the biological control of key constraints of cereal–livestock mixed production systems in sub-Saharan Africa was supported in **Kenya, Ethiopia** and **Tanzania** and contributed to making the push-pull technology accessible to millions of smallholder farmers living in the drier regions of Africa.

The EU promoted the generation and delivery of global public goods, by putting research into action in the areas of nutrition, sustainability and resilience, through the CGIAR and other international agricultural research centres, and through European research and academic organisations.





# Looking ahead



The EU has been an active and dedicated partner in seeking to address challenges and lay the foundations for a sustainable future. This is not just about providing substantial financial support to achieve joint objectives, but rather about sharing experience, building capacity, strengthening good governance from the local to the global level and enhancing multisectoral support that builds resilience to future food crises and quashes malnutrition. The examples highlighted in this booklet are just some of many, showing how partners can come together and help reach vulnerable populations, support rural livelihoods, empower women and stimulate investments in agriculture. Positive results can be accomplished with enduring determination backed up by sufficient resources and building on specific contexts and country leadership.

Ongoing challenges need to be tackled to improve the present and protect the future. We have just 11 years remaining in which to achieve the SDG 2 targets of ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition, doubling agricultural productivity and ensuring sustainable food production systems, while maintaining agricultural biodiversity. The EU will continue to play its role as a global political actor in advancing this agenda, including in international fora such as the G7 and G20, through strengthening its partnerships at the global level, for example with the UN Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD, and WFP), and with partner countries.

As requested by the European Council in its '*Conclusions on Strengthening Global Food and Nutrition Security*'<sup>15</sup>, the EU will continue to work with the Member States. Addressing critical issues such as the impact of climate change on agriculture, developing inclusive value chains, transforming agri-food systems through development-smart innovations, linking small-scale farmers to markets and supporting MSMEs to create job opportunities in rural areas requires a strategic approach to food crises and malnutrition across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

<sup>15</sup> (14554/18)



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