

Finland's priorities in FAO cooperation

1. Functioning and effectiveness as the objective

Finland's objective is to further improve the **functioning and effectiveness of the FAO** as an organisation that is capable of reaching the targets set for it within the agreed budget. The priorities include the **reliability, high quality and independence of information produced by the organisation** and its role as a neutral **discussion forum** in various contexts.

To reach the objective the focus needs to be placed on good governance and performance.

For the external and internal FAO operations good governance and performance mean:

- More efficient action, transparency and better influence
- Developing the management systems
- Open cooperation endorsed by the member countries, to ensure a stable financial basis
- Stronger cooperation, strategic partnerships with other organisations, actors, civil society including producer organisations and international treaty mechanisms at all levels. In particular smooth cooperation and coordination with the IFAD and WFP both in Rome and at the country level.
- Further clarification of target setting and monitoring of the results, including functioning indicators and clear analysis of the results
- Independent evaluations
- Smoother personnel administration and promoting gender equality in FAO recruitment

2. Focus on the content

Finland has specified the following priorities for the content which are to be promoted in FAO work by including them, as appropriate, in the statements made at various meetings and by making sure that budget and voluntary funding is specifically targeted to these issues.

The criteria for selecting the priorities include the considerable weight of these issues in terms of reaching the FAO's strategic objectives. The selection was also influenced by Finland's own national interest, competence and experience in these issues.

Information and standardization work of the FAO, in particular

- **Statistical work**, also taking account of better compatibility of reporting by the FAO with that done for other purposes and the new opportunities offered by digitalization. It is also important to strengthen the link between the FAO's statistical work and the monitoring of sustainable development indicators.
- Need- and target-oriented **information production**, including better access to information, reliability, and improving the usability of information on the grass-root level
- Work of the **standards**: in particular, Codex Alimentarius and International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), where the key issue is the utilisation of scientific information in decision-making, securing access to safe, nutritious and healthy food, and use of the approved standards as the basis for negotiations on agreements.

Risk resilience. This comprises

- Preservation and sustainable use of **biological and ecosystem diversity**, in particular, agrobiodiversity¹ and the diversity of genetic resources
- **Sustainable food systems**, which includes emergency supplies and food security, climate change adaptation both in the short and long term, climate change mitigation, water resources issues, healthy nutrition, food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health, and good practices tested in Finland and the Nordic countries relating to these
- **International Year of Plant Health 2020** and the activities related to this
- **Antimicrobial resistance** issues within the FAO's sphere of activities
- Preventing risks caused by **conflicts and natural disasters** and recovery from crises

Sustainable management of natural resources and resource efficiency. This comprises

- Circular economy -thinking including food loss reduction and nutrient recycling
- Promoting a **sustainable diet**
- **Water issues**, including search for contacts between the FAO's Blue Growth initiative and Finland's Programme on Blue Bioeconomy and making better known the innovations that improve the environmental sustainability and resource efficiency of water use, fishing and fish farming
- **Sustainable forestry**, taking account of the international agreements, decisions and actors influencing forests and the forest sector (e.g. CBD, UNCCC and UNCCD, UN Forum on Forests, Collaborative Partnership on Forests and relevant stakeholders). Cooperation especially with the UNECE Committee on Forests and Forest Industry continues and is strengthened.
- Soil protection, sustainable land use as well as **land management** and land ownership questions
- Promoting good governance, gender equality and a human rights based approach in the management of natural resources, thus also reducing the risk of conflicts
- **Sustainable energy solutions in agriculture and the rural areas** (including the utilisation of agro-biomass and biowaste and biogas solutions)

Finland considers all the cross-cutting objectives of the content of the FAO activities as highly important – gender equality, climate change issues, nutrition and good governance – and through its own actions contributes to reaching these objectives.

Finland supports the alignment of FAO work with the Agenda 2030.

Finland is committed to a human rights based approach and exercises influence on the FAO and the technical working groups and committees in order that this approach is realised in the FAO's activities.

Finland stresses that to reach the FAO's strategic objectives we also need to strengthen rural entrepreneurship, promote multi-actor partnerships, and further develop and encourage innovation.

¹ Agrobiodiversity refers to the diversity of animals, plants and microorganisms used in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. This includes the diversity of the species used for food, feed, fibre and fuel and of soil microorganisms, pollinators and predators that support the production as well as the diversity of arable lands, pastures, forests and aquatic ecosystems.