



# Eswatini and FAO

## *Promoting climate-resilient, market-oriented agriculture for food and nutrition security*

Eswatini and FAO have partnered since the country joined the Organization in 1971. FAO assistance has covered the formulation and implementation of food security and nutrition policies, including risk reduction and management strategies, and activities to increase agricultural productivity. More recently, cooperation has included a focus on market access and agricultural competitiveness, with support to smallholders' transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture. Emphasis is also given to the sustainable management of natural resources.

### Promoting horticulture

With the overall objective of achieving food security by facilitating more balanced diets, FAO has successfully completed the implementation of a fruit and vegetable production project. This intervention was designed to develop an organized, aggregated and integrated national programme. Covering the three main agro-ecological zones of the country, the programme targeted 110 farming households in the four regions of Eswatini. Farmers were encouraged to plant fruit trees together with their crops and vegetables. To this end, each farmer received up to 156 fruit tree seedlings including mangos, peaches, litchis, avocados and nectarines. Also, a total of 118 households were trained on the different climate-smart agriculture techniques including production, handling and marketing of fruit and vegetable produce.

Supporting farmers in the production of fruit trees and vegetables has proved beneficial, especially during the dry seasons. Thanks to FAO assistance, not only could farmers ensure a balanced diet for their families, but they could also sell their produce at ready-made markets and generate income.

*Project: Household climate-smart, market-led fruit and vegetable production project. Implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with FAO and the National Agricultural Marketing Board of Eswatini (NAMBoard).*

### Matching FAO's expertise to Eswatini's development priorities

FAO assistance in Eswatini is shaped by the 2016-2020 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which is centered on three priority areas:

- **Food and Nutrition Security – the Healthy Consumer.** Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are an unfortunate growing phenomenon in the country. To address this issue, FAO is promoting food and nutrition gardens, sustainable food production techniques as well as improved dietary standards and regulations.
- **Market-led agricultural production and processing.** Emphasis is placed on medium and small scale producers in the crop and livestock subsectors, by enhancing their productive capacity, promoting diversification and ensuring that production meets market demand.
- **Sustainable use of natural resources and climate change adaptation,** through the adoption of coping strategies for disasters, the establishment of food reserves and the improvement of land productivity. Climate-smart agriculture and water harvesting and storage technologies at household level are key factors.

Jointly developed with the Government and other development partners, the CPF reflects relevant priorities in key national development policies. The CPF is fully aligned with the UN Development Assistance Framework for Eswatini.

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## Empowering women and HIV-affected people

Eswatini faces considerable challenges in addressing food security for poor and vulnerable households, the majority of which comprise women and youth. This challenge is compounded by a high HIV/AIDS rate, which has had a significant negative impact on agricultural productivity.

With a view to improve vulnerable households' food production, while increasing their income, FAO has established a total of 1 900 food and nutrition gardens. The initiative seeks to engage those living with HIV/AIDS (86 percent women) in food and nutrition gardens to supplement their dietary needs through the production of fresh vegetables and herbs from their own gardens. These gardens have been further equipped with family drip kits to provide much needed irrigation water using a water saving technology. Thanks to this project, vulnerable households are now able to produce or acquire sufficient, appropriate food to meet their short- and long-term nutritional needs. Also, beneficiaries' farming skills have been enhanced to enable the continuous production of vegetables for household consumption and local sales.

## Recovery from the impacts of the El Niño-induced drought

Following the recent El-Niño induced drought, FAO has helped farmers resume their crop production. As part of the Organization's efforts, agricultural inputs have been supplied through an innovative e-voucher system that uses smartcards for farmers to access farming inputs from agrodealers located in close proximity to farmers in Eswatini.

The initiative has provided 10 000 farming households with sufficient inputs to cover at least 0.5-1 ha of cropland with maize and other crops, including bean, groundnut, sweet potato vines, sorghum and cowpeas. A total of 6 895 farmers (65 percent women and 20 percent young farmers) were able to obtain inputs in time for the planting season thanks to the e-voucher system. Some of them have also managed to share their surplus produce with other community members in need.

## Global knowledge transfer

Eswatini farmers on Swazi Nation Land (SNL) lack secure tenure and have limited access to financing instruments, technology and irrigation. Also, there is a lack of diversification of agricultural activities while the incidence of weather-induced crop failures is high, resulting in low production.

To cope with this, under the South-South Cooperation framework, Morocco and Eswatini are currently engaged in a programme focusing on three main areas: water governance, horticulture development and livestock production under a communal system.

The main objective of this initiative is to strengthen the capacity of Eswatini's agricultural sector by designing and implementing farming activities based on evidence and rural development approaches. To this end, the Governments of Morocco and Eswatini have agreed to exchange knowledge, experiences, good practices, policies, technology and resources to achieve development solutions. The project is expected to contribute to the achievement of food security, poverty reduction and the sustainable management of natural resources by modernizing the agriculture sector.

*"Food security and adequate nutrition for all is where sustainable development starts."*

**José Graziano da Silva**  
FAO Director-General

