

Global Environment Facility tasks FAO and IFAD to lead new \$230 million agrifood systems transformation program

The initiative aims to support shifts towards sustainable nature-positive production and efficient value chains for crops, commodities, livestock, and aquaculture

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Rome – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) will lead the Food Systems Integrated Program of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The program will direct an estimated \$230 million – to be complemented by additional co-financing - in project grants to support countries to transform their agrifood systems to be more sustainable and to deliver global environmental benefits in conserving biodiversity, combatting land degradation, mitigating, and adapting to climate change and contributing to national food security. The decision was made at the [63rd Council Meeting of the GEF](#).

Agrifood systems encompass farming, harvesting, fishing, livestock-rearing, storing, processing, transporting selling, buying, eating, and disposing of our food. Agrifood systems also include non-food resources that come from agriculture, like cotton and forest products. While agrifood systems are the source of nutrition and livelihoods, they are also one of the major causes of environmental degradation. Agricultural sectors including forestry, and other land use sectors, are the biggest drivers of global biodiversity loss. Unsustainable agrifood systems globally degrade one-third of agricultural land, contribute an estimated 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, and consume 70 percent of groundwater withdrawals.

“As populations grow and diets improve, we must transform our agrifood systems to supply more people with healthier and nutritious food, while conserving and restoring our ecosystems and natural resources,” says FAO Director-General, QU Dongyu. “As we co-lead GEF’s Food Systems Integrated Program, we will continue to work closely with Members to ensure an impactful catalyzing transformation of national and global agrifood systems. The recently held COP27, and preparations for CBD COP15, clearly indicate there is no time to waste – we must put agrifood systems transformation at the center of solutions for biodiversity loss, food insecurity and climate crises.”

The Food Systems Integrated Program is the second largest program approved in the GEF's programming directions for 2022 – 2026, known as [GEF-8](#). The program will aim to catalyze national and global shifts towards sustainable nature-positive production systems by supporting efficient, sustainable, and resilient value chains for crops, forest products, commodities, livestock, and aquaculture. FAO and IFAD aim to align the program with the outcomes of the 2021 [UN Food Systems Summit](#) and collaborate with partners, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the Nature Conservancy, and the Regional Development Banks to deliver greater results.

“Transforming the way we produce, distribute, and consume food so that our actions are truly inclusive and sustainable requires a paradigm shift. We need to work in partnership, assemble and leverage finance and investments, and strengthen policies, knowledge, and capacities,” says IFAD President, Alvaro Lario. “The GEF Integrated Program on Food Systems will support countries to define their national pathways and prioritize interventions that have proven to deliver measurable benefits for the climate, the environment and the people.”

FAO and IFAD are implementing agencies of the GEF, a partnership of 18 agencies and 183 countries which addresses the world's most challenging environmental issues related to biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, chemicals, and international waters. GEF provides grants to countries to meet these challenges whilst contributing to key development goals, such as food security.

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