

Near East, East, North Africa and Europe

23 countries

and Gaza and the West Bank	1
Albania	
Algeria	
Armenia	
Azerbaijan	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
Djibouti	2
Egypt*	3
Georgia	1
Iraq*	1
Jordan	2
Kyrgyzstan	1
Lebanon	
Republic of Moldova*	2
Montenegro	
Morocco	3
Somalia	
Sudan	2
Syrian Arab Republic	1
Tajikistan	2
Tunisia	2
Türkiye	2
Uzbekistan	1
Yemen	

Numbers indicate ongoing projects and programmes

* Countries with ongoing ASAP grants

US\$905.2 million

invested by IFAD in the region's ongoing portfolio

US\$83.5 million

in IFAD financing approved in 2023

27 ongoing programmes and projects

in partnership with 15 countries in the region and Gaza and the West Bank at the end of 2023

2 new programmes and projects

approved in 2023 in Morocco and Somalia

2 new country strategy notes

for Algeria and Montenegro

Highlighted project

Djibouti

The Soil and Water Management Programme (PROGRES) is bringing about improvements in natural resource management and nutrition and is changing the positions of women in communities. A major focus is the improvement of water infrastructure. PROGRES has constructed multiple cisterns and reservoirs, reducing the travel time for fetching water and providing communities with safe water. The programme supports income-generating activities for women and training for improved nutrition.

Time spent collecting water for households is down from 35 to 10 hours per week

Fivefold increase in annual production of pastures

240 counsellors trained to disseminate life-saving practices to prevent maternal and child malnutrition

Improved care for stunted children provided through a community fund

Morocco

Thanks to the development of a pump and reservoir system, Fatima Abumarim can access clean drinking water from a tap at her home in Azal village.

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Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, progress in the Near East and North Africa region has been slow. Improvements in economic growth and decent work (SDG 8) have not materialized, which has held back progress across the other goals. Most alarmingly, hunger has worsened. These trends can be attributed to many factors, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing crises and conflicts in the region.

In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, however, progress has been more mixed. Extreme poverty, undernourishment and malnutrition have all declined, although inequality has increased and unemployment – especially among young people – persists.

In this challenging context, IFAD's work is focused on increasing the economic mobility, incomes and productivity of small-scale farmers. Climate action continues to be a priority for us, with many rural people struggling to adapt to the increasing impacts of climate change across the region.

These two subregions face diverse challenges. On the one hand, the priorities of IFAD-supported projects are often similar, while on the other, approaches need to take diverse realities into account.

Investing in climate adaptation

Building the resilience of rural people to climate change is a focus of IFAD-supported projects across the Near East, North Africa and Europe. For example, in Somalia, the Resilient Livelihood Action to COVID-19 project strengthened the ability of rural people to overcome poverty and food insecurity by introducing agricultural support packages comprising crop seeds, fertilizers, livestock feed and basic farm equipment. The project also provided training in climate-smart agricultural techniques, which contributed to building climate resilience in vulnerable communities. Already in the early stages of implementation, the project saw a 20 per cent rise in productive asset ownership among project participants.

Similarly, in Sudan, the Integrated Agriculture and Marketing Development Project has promoted measures to build resilience of cropping systems to climate change. Among these are the use of drought-tolerant seeds, enhanced water management practices and the adoption of improved farming equipment. The project has also worked with rural people to create sustainable and nutritious vegetable gardens, providing healthier diets and reducing reliance on food imports.

Climate-smart practices were also at the heart of the Livestock and Pasture Development Project II in Tajikistan.



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“After just one rainy season, we could see the results,” says Togirkhon Aymatov, a local horticulturist.

“There was no erosion on the hectare with pistachio trees, whereas the adjacent area was further eroded by heavy spring rains. That was enough to convince us.”

The project introduced an innovative climate-smart technique: the **Groasis Waterboxx**, a reusable system that collected moisture to help saplings establish roots in dry areas. On a previously eroded and abandoned field used as a demonstration plot, the project planted pistachio trees.

Building resilient livelihoods in fragile contexts

Conflict and fragility in the Near East and North Africa have increased the vulnerability of many rural people. Giving these people opportunities and hope for the future is a major emphasis of IFAD's work.

In Jordan, the **Small Ruminants Investment and Graduating Households in Transition Project** (widely known as **SIGHT**) has supported more than 35,000 households of both Syrian refugees and host communities with food packages and grants for microbusiness activities. Ahmed Rafee, a Syrian farmer who fled to Jordan with his family, used the grant to buy an egg hatchery, which he is now operating with his son. By breeding chickens to produce more eggs and using innovative techniques (such as hydroponics) to produce low-cost feed, the father and son have high hopes of **building decent lives** for their families in their adopted home.

“This is more than just a stable source of income. This is something that we can rely on to be less anxious about the future and to preserve our dignity,” said Ahmed.

So far, around 40 per cent of Syrian refugees participating in the project have been able to move out of poverty.

Linking rural people to remunerative markets

In Tunisia, the **Agropastoral Value Chains Project** (PRODEFIL) works particularly with women to create income-generating opportunities. The project provides financial assistance and training to support rural people to start up their own businesses. The construction of rural roads and water infrastructure has improved project participants' mobility and access to services and water while also reducing women's workload. Some 90 per cent of the people benefiting from the project are women, and more than half are young people.

“With the financing, we purchased 33 ewes and two rams,” said Hayet, a young entrepreneur who participated in the project.

Now that she is a successful entrepreneur, Hayet travels to markets and fairs to sell her products. She contributes financially to her family, and her status within the household has improved. This is just one example from the many women whose lives have been transformed by PRODEFIL.

Linking small-scale farmers to markets is a feature of IFAD-supported projects across the region. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a public-private partnership model – under the **Rural Competitiveness Development Project** – has been critical for achieving this goal. Poor households benefited from a contract farming arrangement, along with a package of inputs, which allowed them to participate in commercial value chains. The project also contributed to the creation of more than 450 jobs and a 30 per cent increase in the commercial value of project participants' products.