

YEMEN

Rural Growth Programme (RGP)



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ISSUES

Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East. Low agricultural productivity, insufficient off-farm economic and employment opportunities and climate change are worsening rural poverty. At just 90 cubic metres per person a year, Yemen's renewable freshwater resources are among the lowest in the world, and they are being rapidly depleted. Agriculture accounts for 90 per cent of freshwater use, but much of this precious resource is used inefficiently.

A detailed vulnerability analysis was undertaken by Loughborough University to identify climate risks and vulnerability 'hot spots'. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) were used to evaluate flood and soil erosion risks, opportunities for water harvesting by constructing stone terraces, and potential impacts of climate hazards on crop productivity. The study integrated data from meteorological observations and soil surveys, as well as remotely sensed precipitation indices and topographic information.

The main risks identified include soil erosion, extended droughts and floods. Climate change is causing temperature increases above the global average, and exacerbating the variability and intensity of rainfall. The programme will work in the areas most vulnerable to climate change, which include Al-Dhala, Dhamar, Hodeida, Lahej and Taiz governorates.

ACTIONS

The programme will stimulate more sustainable economic growth for women and men in rural communities. This includes increasing their resilience to climate change impacts by helping communities to diversify their livelihoods options and improving the management of natural resources. Investments in climate-resilient infrastructure will also support agricultural development.

RGP will build on a detailed vulnerability assessment to select the best locations for cropping and promote wild varieties of endogenous species that are resistant to drought such as date palms, fig trees and pomegranates. Agroforestry and integrated crop-livestock systems have also been identified as priorities.



Investing in rural people

Adaptation for
Smallholder
Agriculture
Programme

ASAP

Launched in 2012, the Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme (ASAP) channels climate and environmental finance to enable smallholder farmers who participate in IFAD projects to increase their resilience. Through ASAP, IFAD is systematically integrating climate resilience into the overall IFAD portfolio.

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Total cost: US\$127.4 million

ASAP grant: US\$10.0 million

Approved DSF grant:

US\$15.0 million

Cofinancing:

Islamic Development Bank US\$15.4 million; European Union US\$16.1 million; Global Environment Facility US\$10.0 million; microfinance institutions US\$17.7 million; Agriculture and Fisheries Production Promotion Fund US\$12.8 million

Other contributions: Republic of Yemen US\$9.3 million; beneficiaries US\$21.0 million

Programme period:

7 years (2014-2021)

Executing agency: Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation

ASAP beneficiaries: 800,000

Programme objectives:

Reduce poverty and food insecurity in rural areas and increase the climate resilience of small farmers.

The programme will have three interrelated components:

- **Community empowerment and livelihoods diversification.** This component will empower households and communities to manage their own development and engage in income-generating activities. Activities will focus on community institution-building, women's empowerment, and stimulating microfinance and income-generating activities. Community development associations will be established and their management and conflict resolution capacities strengthened.

Each community will be assisted to undertake a participatory diagnosis of their development priorities and constraints. Investments and activities to address these constraints will be identified through a participatory process and built into community action plans (CAPs). Volunteers within each community will be trained to support this process and ensure that the CAPs include climate risk management measures, with a focus on environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.

Women's literacy and life skills (such as in health care, nutrition, legal rights, and natural resource management) will be supported to ensure they are fully involved in the development of their communities.

The programme will build on savings and credit groups and associations to support livelihoods diversification initiatives. These initiatives will mainly target young people and women-managed farm and off-farm small businesses and microenterprises. Based on a systematic analysis of business opportunities, the main forms of support will include the provision of technical and management training, matching grants and market access support. Renewable energy grants will support the development of small businesses and microenterprises in villages that are not connected to the national grid. This will not only reduce dependency on fossil fuel sources, but also contribute to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Natural resources management and resilient infrastructure.** This programme component is focused on improving natural resource management in degraded areas and enhancing the climate resilience of rural infrastructure. Investments will centre on integrated water management and soil conservation, rangeland rehabilitation, water harvesting, the reseeded of indigenous cereal species and adaptive engineering of rural roads to harvest excess water run-off, prevent flood damage and reduce surface erosion. Other activities will include the rehabilitation of terraces, the protection of *wadi* banks and reforestation to increase slope stability

and reduce soil erosion. Rock terraces are especially important as they protect soil from erosion and retain moisture to support rainfed agriculture. The CAPs and a preliminary analysis by the Department of Forestry and Rangelands to assess the status of rangelands will inform programme investments.

- **Agriculture development.** This component will support the adoption of improved and climate-resilient agricultural practices and technologies in vulnerable communities. Investments will focus on extension support and the provision of farming inputs, improvements in irrigation efficiency, the diversification of agricultural production and applied research to promote long-term vulnerability reduction. Women and men will be trained as village agriculture technicians to support their own communities – their training will also cover climate risk and environmental issues.

EXPECTED IMPACTS

The programme will enhance agricultural production and increase the climate change resilience of about 800,000 smallholders by stimulating strong and sustainable rural economic growth. The programme will achieve the following impacts through its components:

- Households and communities empowered to manage their own development and engage in income-generating activities:
 - 550 community development associations formed, strengthened and legally registered, and 30 per cent of leadership positions held by women.
 - At least 50,000 people (of whom at least 50 per cent will be women) establish or expand an additional income-generating activity to strengthen their resilience.
- Natural resource management improved and focusing on climate resilience:
 - The construction of 275 water-harvesting structures and the restoration of 1,150 hectares of abandoned terraces improve access to water, helping to reduce the time spent on collecting water from 4 hours to 1 hour a day.
 - At least 244 kilometres of rural roads are 'climate-proofed'.
 - 1,220 hectares of agricultural land rehabilitated to resume production.
- Improved, climate-resilient agricultural practices and technologies adopted:
 - At least 70 per cent of smallholders in each target community adopt more resilient agricultural practices or technologies by programme end.
 - CAPs in each of the 550 village units integrate climate adaptation priorities.

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