

Public policies for family farming

Main findings and recommendations
following the study of 12 policies

Summary document



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Family farming in public policies and programmes

Family farming is a form of organised agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production that is managed and operated by a family and relies mainly on family labour. Due to its **multifunctional nature**, this sector is **the object of public policies that go beyond the strictly agricultural domain**. Strengthening family farming requires comprehensive approaches that address dimensions such as gender equality, youth inclusion, financing, digitalisation, agro-ecology and territorial development, among others.

Today's global context is increasingly challenging and ever-changing. Extreme weather events, geopolitical tensions, weakened multilateralism and profound ecological changes have a direct impact on agri-food systems and the living conditions of rural populations. This situation highlights the need to **move towards agri-food policies that can adapt to these changes: innovative policies, developed through dialogue between multiple agents, and which take a systematic view of food systems**.

In this framework, the World Rural Forum, with the technical support of Aliades, Coop. V., conducted a **cross-sectional analysis of twelve public policies aimed at promoting family farming** in Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Panama, Mozambique, Togo, Ethiopia, Uganda, Indonesia, Nepal, Fiji and Samoa . Based on the study of various programmes and instruments, the analysis identifies common patterns, innovative practices and structural challenges that influence the effectiveness and implementation of these policies. The resulting

insights gained aim to **contribute to the formulation of future policy frameworks and support programmes for family farming and sustainable rural development**.

This document presents the main insights and recommendations derived from the study.



1. Access the full study by Aliades, Coop. V and the World Rural Forum via this [link](#). Available in Spanish, English and French.

Main insights and key messages

Looking ahead, family farming will remain a strategic priority for food security, agro-ecological transition and climate resilience within territories. **Policies should evolve towards more integrated schemes** that combine productive incentives with climate change adaptation measures, innovative agricultural insurance and digital traceability mechanisms.

In different countries, the programmes studied in support of family farming show a wide range of approaches, scales and challenges. From national policies with multi-provincial coverage such as Brazil and Nepal, to pilot or hub-based initiatives such as Togo or Samoa, governments and programmes seek to balance objectives of inclusion, efficiency and sustainability. The analysis conducted confirms that there is no single valid model, but **rather a combination of instruments that, when coordinated, achieve more sustainable impacts.**

One key takeaway is the importance of **coordinating funding, services** (extension, innovation, organisation) **and markets.** Experiences such as PRONAF in Brazil or Law 2046 in Colombia show that when accessible credit, technical assistance and access to institutional markets operate in a coordinated manner, family farming can get off the ground. Conversely, when one of these pillars fails—especially market access—the impact of policies is diluted,

even in contexts with resources and political will. This "three-stroke engine" appears again and again: well-designed credit and subsidies, close technical support and predictable demand (public procurement or agreements with buyers) that turn production into stable sales.

Another key takeaway is the importance of **designing policies with a differentiated approach, taking into account the heterogeneity of farmers.** The most successful experiences segment by gender, age, level of vulnerability or type of productive system, which ensures greater inclusion and a more equitable social impact.

Comparative experience highlights that **financial predictability and political commitment** are crucial to ensure policy continuity. Policies such as Nepal's Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) or SUSTENTA in Mozambique face challenges precisely because of their over-reliance on external cooperation or institutional fragmentation.

CHALLENGE

Strengthening local institutions and multi-level governance is a key challenge for the future. The decentralisation observed in several countries has proven to be an opportunity, but also a risk if it is not accompanied by resources and technical capacities. In this sense, future regulatory frameworks should strengthen the role of sub-national governments and Civil Society Organisations in programme management, avoiding the concentration of benefits.

Furthermore, evidence suggests that **robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems** enhance learning and replicability. Pilot schemes with clear indicators, such as those in Samoa or Indonesia, have allowed lessons to be drawn for other territories and justified the extension of coverage. A recurring theme with regard to

M&E is that there is a lack of systems to measure with traceability "who got what, for what and with what results", and without such data it is difficult to hold to account or scale what works. Strengthening common indicators, regular reporting and audits is not a luxury: it is what makes policy learnable and correctable.

Innovation as a multiplier for public policies

Innovation has a direct and multiplying effect on the impact of public policies and plans, as it introduces tools and approaches that enhance their effectiveness, sustainability, and inclusiveness.

One of the key takeaways revolves around the innovative mechanisms introduced by the different policies. The examples analysed show that the creation of differentiated credit lines, climate insurance, mobile banking or revolving funds make it possible to reach previously excluded segments, reducing inequalities and strengthening economic resilience. Similarly, the incorporation of digital technologies, information systems, adapted mechanisation and monitoring platforms improves public management, facilitates evidence-based decision-making and broadens farmers' access to markets

and services. Likewise, social innovation—such as mainstreaming gender, youth and community participation—**transforms rural governance, legitimising policies and ensuring local ownership.**

In sum, **the more innovative the financial, technological, institutional and social mechanisms, the greater the capacity of policies to generate inclusion, stability and sustainability in rural development.** A number of insights are highlighted regarding the introduction of innovations in the policies studied:



The programmes and policy frameworks analysed all **recognise family, peasant and community farming as a strategic pillar** for rural development, food security and environmental sustainability.



There is a **strong emphasis on financial innovation**, with differentiated credit, agricultural insurance, digital micro-finance, revolving funds and green products, which expand small farmers' access to previously inaccessible resources. The need to innovate in rural finance is a key takeaway for the future. The Interoperability of financial systems, as in Uganda, offers a replicable path if accompanied by user protection and financial education.



Social inclusion emerges as a core focus across all areas, with specific measures for women, young people, indigenous peoples and vulnerable communities, promoting equity in access to land, credit, training and leadership.



Policies prioritise **sustainable and climate-smart farming approaches**, integrating agro-ecological practices, soil conservation, agroforestry and climate resilience.



Governance and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms are strengthened through multi-stakeholder platforms, unified registers of farmers and clear legal frameworks that improve transparency and territorial coordination.



Technological innovation (digital platforms, information systems, drones, sensors and mobile applications) is transforming extension, commercialisation and production planning processes.



Public procurement and short food supply chains are recognised as effective tools for guaranteeing stable incomes, boosting local economies and linking rural production with institutional markets.



Civil society organisations as key agents

The participation of civil society organisations is decisive in policy making and implementation. Where they have played an active role—for example in registers of farmers, fund management or the validation of land contracts—higher levels of local ownership and institutional legitimacy are seen.

The analysis highlights the fundamental role played by civil society organisations, in particular organisations of family farmers, as key agents in public policy making and implementation. Their contribution brings social legitimacy, territorial knowledge and the capacity to coordinate with rural communities.



Their participation **has made the specific needs** of family farming **visible**, including access to finance, markets, technical assistance and land rights, making policies more inclusive and adapted to the diversity of contexts.



These organisations **contribute to strengthening multi-stakeholder governance** and consolidating spaces for policy dialogue, monitoring and evaluation, which increases transparency and effectiveness in implementation.



Evidence shows **that their involvement has favoured the inclusion of women, young people and historically marginalised groups**, enhancing equity in access to resources and opportunities.



Strategic recommendations

The following are some of the **main strategic recommendations** derived from the analysis of 12 public policies that promote family farming.

Recommendations for governments and policy makers

Governments must take an active role in creating legal and financial frameworks that guarantee the continuity and sustainability of policies that promote family farming.

- 1 Strengthen institutionalisation and financial predictability:** consolidating multi-annual funds that reduce dependence on international cooperation and ensuring the continuity of key programmes. Cases such as PRONAF in Brazil and the ADS in Nepal show that stable resource allocation is a condition for long-term impact.
- 2 Boost multi-level governance and effective decentralisation:** strengthening the capacity of sub-national governments to implement programmes, with criteria of transparency and financial traceability. This involves strengthening registers of family farmers and local accountability mechanisms.
- 3 Promote differentiated and inclusive policies:** designing instruments adapted to different profiles (women, young people, indigenous communities, remote territories). Affirmative lines in credit and public procurement have been shown to improve equity and broaden the beneficiary base.
- 4 Promote the coordination of instruments:** integrating credit, technical assistance, insurance and institutional market access into coherent packages. Evidence shows that isolated policies achieve partial results, while the combination of instruments ensures greater sustainability.



- 5 **Consolidate monitoring and evaluation systems:** establishing robust systems to measure outcomes in income, productivity, inclusion and climate resilience. Pilot schemes with clear indicators, such as in Samoa and Indonesia, facilitate learning and replicability.
- 6 Encourage the active and effective participation of various agents, such as **family farming organisations, at every stage of the public policy cycle:** design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- 7 **Explicitly mention family farmers as the target audience.** The policy should

also provide a definition of family farming and identify family farmers in official registers, which will enable a more accurate assessment of the impact of the measures.

- 8 **Strengthen the technical, financial and organisational capacities** of family farming organisations so that they can have a stronger impact on negotiation and decision-making processes.
- 9 **Institutionalise permanent multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanisms** that formally recognize CSOs as strategic partners of the state and international cooperation.

Recommendations for civil society organisations, in particular family farming organisations

CSOs, especially those linked to family farming, have a central role in guaranteeing the legitimacy and sustainability of public policies that promote family farming. Their role combines **political advocacy, social observation and innovation from the territories.**

-  **Fortalecer las capacidades organizativas:** invertir en formación de liderazgo, gestión financiera y negociación colectiva, de manera que las cooperativas y asociaciones puedan actuar como interlocutores sólidos frente al Estado y el mercado.
-  **Strengthen organisational capacity:** investing in leadership training, financial management and collective bargaining, so that cooperatives and

associations can act as strong interlocutors vis-à-vis the State and the market.

-  **Actively participate in the design and implementation of public policies,** taking advantage of spaces for consultation to ensure that they respond to the real needs of the territories. Experience shows that the involvement of CSOs increases the legitimacy and effectiveness of policies.



Market diversification: in addition to accessing public procurement, family farmers should seek to create links with responsible agribusinesses, sustainability certifications and niche markets. Here, CSOs can provide technical assistance and access to information.



Promote social and technological innovation, for example through the use of digital tools to improve product traceability, access to finance and the

visibility of local production. Experiences in Uganda with digital financial inclusion demonstrate the potential of these solutions.



Establish a focus on rural youth and women: strengthening mentoring programmes, training and access to productive assets that allow new generations and rural women to play a leading role in productive transformation.

Recommendations for international cooperation agents

International cooperation agents, such as international organisations, development banks or regional platforms play an essential role as catalysts of resources, knowledge and coordination between countries. In order for their support to have a more sustained and transformative impact, the following recommendations are made:



Support the financial sustainability of programmes and policies: moving from short-term projects to multi-annual funding and co-funding mechanisms with national governments, which

guarantee the continuity of programmes beyond the cooperation cycles.



Facilitate regional learning: systematising and disseminating successful experiences and failures, creating open repositories of policies and results. The Sur-Sur exchange has proven to be highly useful in adapting innovations.



Boost innovation and digitalisation: financing and supporting initiatives that integrate climate-indexed insurance, digital traceability platforms and market information systems, helping to reduce risks and improve transparency.



Strengthen a global advocacy agenda: aligning support with international frameworks such as the Decade of Family Farming and the SDGs, strengthening the voice of FF in multilateral spaces.



Promote climate resilience and agro-ecological transition: prioritising programmes that strengthen adaptation to climate change, sustainable management of natural resources and agro-ecological production, with an emphasis on vulnerable territories.

