



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Belgium contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate-induced risks on the livelihoods of wheat farmers

Nearly 2.5 million people in Iraq are in need of humanitarian assistance and 1.2 million people are internally displaced. People in need are present in nearly all of Iraq's governorates, but vulnerabilities remain highest in conflict-affected governorates in the northern and central regions. Years of conflict and instability have damaged crops and destroyed vital agricultural infrastructure, leaving already vulnerable rural communities at further risk of food insecurity. Additionally, Iraq is one of the most vulnerable countries in the Near East to the impacts of climate change. Climate-induced risks such as increasing temperatures, decreasing precipitation, intensive sand and dust storms and acute water scarcity among other risks, are posing enormous pressures on the livelihoods and food security of agriculture-dependent communities. Approximately one in every three households is resorting to crisis or emergency coping mechanisms such as spending savings, purchasing food on credit or depleting productive assets.

In 2022, 39 percent of crop producers in Iraq reported planting less areas compared with a typical year. Furthermore, about 85 percent reported challenges in accessing essential production inputs such as water (56 percent), fertilizers (54 percent), insecticides (30 percent) and seeds (16 percent). Consequently, the 2022 cereal harvest is expected to be approximately 35 percent lower than 2021. Rainfed agricultural production is expected to be significantly lower due to the persistence of drought conditions for a second consecutive year (mainly affecting wheat and barley crops). Moreover, La Niña phenomenon will likely impact Iraq during the remaining months of 2022 as well as early 2023; and below-average rainfall is expected during the winter wheat season, impacting both rainfed and irrigated areas. In parallel, prices of essential production inputs are soaring, and the trend is likely to persist.

This worrying combination of shocks will further exhaust the resilience of agriculture-dependent communities and their food security. In this context, it is imperative to urgently implement an anticipatory action to mitigate the impacts of climate-induced risks on the livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable farming households. To support this objective, through SFERA, the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium contributed USD 625 000 to FAO. With this generous contribution, FAO will distribute 226 tonnes of drought-tolerant wheat seed and 169.5 tonnes of fertilizer to 1 130 vulnerable farming households in Diwaniyah, Erbil, and Kirkuk. Additionally, the project will train national extension service staff and the targeted beneficiaries on climate-smart irrigation management and good agricultural practices.



Providing time-critical agricultural inputs to farming households protects their livelihoods and improves their food security.

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