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Partnering for food security and sustainable management of natural resources

## Building BRIDGES from Turkey to Africa

Under the FAO-Turkey Forestry Partnership Programme (FTFP), the Boosting Restoration, Income, Development, Generating Ecosystem Services (BRIDGES) Project is implemented in three Great Green Wall (GGW) countries – Eritrea, Mauritania and Sudan – using Action Against Desertification (AAD) restoration methods.

### Large-scale land restoration with local communities

“We must stop and reverse land degradation in Africa. We must bring back to life the more than 200 million hectares of degraded land, pledged by both the AFR100 and Great Green Wall initiatives, which are viable for restoration by 2030”, stated Moctar Sacande, International Project Coordinator of AAD & BRIDGES, during Africa Climate Week in April 2021.

The BRIDGES project, which began with the aim of restoring 5 000 hectares of degraded agro-silvopastoral lands, has already reached 88.6 percent of this target. To date, project activities have been carried out with contributions from local communities of which women represent a part. Ba Mamadou, Chairman of the Executive Committee for the Defence of Mauritania Goural, emphasized in an interview that many young people were involved and contributed directly to the activities.

### Generating income for communities through reinforcing non-wood forest product value chains

The BRIDGES project also seeks to reinforce the value chains of non-wood forest products for resilient and successful community-based green businesses. For this purpose, the project supports Gum Arabic, edible and medicinal plants, Ziziphus Mauritiana, balanites oil and grass fodder value chains in Mauritania, in addition to two nutritional gardens. Gum Arabic, fodder and balanites oil value chains are supported in Sudan.



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Training in Mauritania on monitoring and evaluating the restoration activities

#### Project at a glance:

**Title:** Boosting Restoration, Income, Development, Generating Ecosystem Services (BRIDGES) – GCP/INT/340/TUR

**Objective:** Improved environmental conditions and productivity of the agro-silvopastoral landscapes affected by desertification, land degradation and drought; improved livelihoods of local communities in three Great Green Wall dryland countries (Eritrea, Mauritania, and Sudan); and enhanced South-South cooperation

**Target countries:** Eritrea, Mauritania and Sudan

**Duration:** 5 July 2018 – 31 December 2022

**Budget:** USD 3 000 000 funded by FTTP and USD 600 000 funded by AAD

### Technical capacity development and knowledge sharing

Several training programmes that include large-scale land restoration techniques and management of restoration sites, nutrition vegetable gardening, monitoring and evaluation, planting, sustainable exploitation of natural resources, and workshops were organized in Mauritania and Sudan.



Training in Mauritania on nutritional gardening associated with implementing restoration activities

The project has also contributed to Great Green Wall publications including a restoration manual, the Africa Open Data for Environment, Agriculture and Land Use (D.E.A.L), and articles. More information on these could be found on the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programmes and AAD websites.

### FTFP contributed to COFO through a technical event

The Second Session of the Committee of Forestry (COFO) Working Group on Dryland Forests and Agrosilvopastoral Systems was held virtually on 17-18 November 2021. On the last day of the session, a technical event entitled the “Ankara Initiative and FAO-Turkey forestry partnership in practice: Turkey’s efforts to sustainable dryland management” was organized with the aim of presenting the national activities of the Republic of Turkey on sustainable management of dryland ecosystems, including good practices.

The event provided a useful platform to exchange information and create synergies as the participants became acquainted with the FTTP in general and were involved in regular training workshops organized by the Republic of Turkey, GEF-funded projects implemented by FAO in Turkey on land degradation focal areas, and the Ankara Initiative, which was launched at the UNCCD COP12 in 2015 to strengthen implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

### New projects are underway to support sustainable forestry

Two new projects are underway under the FTTP to support efforts to ensure sustainable forestry. The projects are based on the results of the Samarkand Planning Workshop, which was organized in 2018 with the participation of the countries of Central Asia, and consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey.

One of the projects, which will be developed in collaboration with the Chamber of Forest Engineers of Turkey, will focus on improving biodiversity and sustainable forestry in the Central Asia, while the other project will work to strengthen collaboration between FAO and Turkey by enhancing the capacity of the International Forestry Training Centre.

A virtual kick-off meeting was organized on 17 December 2021 with the participation of representatives from FAO, the Chamber of Forest Engineers of Turkey, SEC countries and Montenegro, to introduce the concept notes for these projects. In his opening remarks, Viorel Gutu, Subregional Coordinator for Central Asia and FAO Representative in Turkey, introduced the projects: “We see this event as an important starting point for several activities which we want to implement together. I want to specifically mention the Training Centre project, which is very close to my heart. This year, a number of wildfires affected forests in Turkey and the broader region. We are therefore discussing with our partners ways to open up this International Forestry Training Centre to many more countries.”

The opening remarks were followed by a technical session in which experts from the Chamber of Forest Engineers introduced the concept notes and the roadmap for project development activities to the participants.

In her speech, Aysegul Selşik, Assistant Representative in Turkey, noted that “the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of natural resources”, and emphasized that “all of us have a role to play”. Ms Selşik further underlined the point that these projects, which have a wide portfolio covering biodiversity, forest management and fighting fires, may lead to the creation of other new projects in the region.



The International Forestry Training Centre in Antalya, Turkey

Following the virtual kick-off meeting, a scoping mission was organized in Antalya on 20-25 December 2021, providing an opportunity to observe the operations of the International Forestry Training Centre, examine the concept notes in detail and carry out consultations.

Recognizing the increasing and extraordinary impacts of climate change, FTFP is taking concrete action to enhance the capacity of the International Forestry Training Centre, which will deal with all aspects of forestry, including forest fires.

## FAO and Turkey sign an agreement to support Central Asian countries through South-South cooperation efforts

FAO and Turkey have signed a South-South and Triangular Cooperation Agreement on deploying Turkish experts to projects sites in Central Asia as part of the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme for food, agriculture and forestry.



Minister Pakdemirli and FAO Assistant Director-General Vladimir Rakhmanin

Fielding Turkish experts to Central Asian project sites will not only widen the expertise and knowledge of beneficiary countries in a variety of areas (e.g. agriculture, agribusiness, food security and nutrition, forestry, nature conservation, drought management, combating desertification, biodiversity and climate change), but also help develop solutions for common development issues in the food and agriculture sector.

Welcoming the agreement, FAO Assistant Director-General Vladimir Rakhmanin noted that Turkey's contributions will strengthen South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Minister Bekir Pakdemirli emphasized that the agreement would facilitate and scale-up Turkey's efforts to support beneficiary countries under the programme.

This new initiative will support and facilitate the implementation of both the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme and the FAO-Turkey Forestry Partnership Programme, as well as deepen the decades-long relations between FAO and Turkey. It will also strengthen FAO's involvement in South-South and Triangular Cooperation by mobilizing Turkey's expertise in agriculture and food-related fields.

## Countries are working together for the sustainable management of fisheries and aquaculture resources in Central Asia under the FISHCap project

### Regional workshop on fish health management and fish diseases brought countries together in Antalya

The FISHCap project organized a regional workshop on fish health management and fish diseases in Antalya, Turkey on 20-22 December 2021. The objective of the workshop was to provide participants with basic knowledge on the common diseases of cultured fish, methodologies to diagnose these diseases and an opportunity to examine fish with symptoms. The workshop was organized in partnership with the Central Union of Aquaculture Producers of Turkey (SUYMERBIR).

#### Project at a glance:

**Title:** Capacity development for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management in Central Asia (Phase I – aquaculture and food safety) - GCP/SEC/013/TUR

**Objective:** To increase regional capacities to effectively address the sustainable exploitation, management, protection and development of freshwater resources for sustainable fish production in support of food safety

**Target countries:** Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

**Duration:** 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2023

**Budget:** USD 1 000 000

During the workshop, each participating country presented the situation in their country as a basis for the effective exchange of information and experience. A laboratory and technical visit was also organized within the scope of the workshop to provide the beneficiary countries with insights drawn from the expertise and practices of Turkey. In addition, experts from Akdeniz University, Istanbul University, the Isparta University of Applied Sciences, Karadeniz Technical University, Sinop University, the Trabzon Fisheries Central Research Institute and FAO gave

comprehensive presentations on fish health management and fish diseases.



The workshop was attended by experts from SEC region.

Within the scope of the workshop, a laboratory and technical visit was organized to provide the beneficiary countries with insights drawn from the expertise and practices of Turkey. On the last day of the workshop, the participants had an opportunity to see fish disease laboratory and fish culture practices at the Mediterranean Fisheries Research, Production and Training Institute.



The field visit by experts from the beneficiary countries to Antalya, Turkey

### Kazakhstan officially joins the FISHCap project

Kazakhstan officially joined the FISHCap project on 7 December 2021, bringing the number of countries that have joined the project to six (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

## Reducing food loss and waste for a better future

### Duration of the project has been extended to 31 October 2022

With the agreement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey, on 18 May 2021, the duration of the project was extended for one year until 31 October 2022. Budget revisions for the new duration were approved by the Ministry in October 2021.

### Project at a glance:

**Title:** Reduction of Food Loss and Waste in Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Turkey – GCP/SEC/015/TUR

**Objective:** Food loss and waste reduction in the context of national food systems and climate change

**Target countries:** Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

**Duration:** 1 November 2019 – 31 October 2021

**Budget:** USD 1 500 000

### The development of a national strategic policy and action plans to reduce FLW is underway

The project aims to assist beneficiary countries in developing national strategies and action plans to reduce food loss and waste (FLW), targeting all subsectors of the food system from farmers to consumers.

The relevant activities are currently underway in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and include an assessment of FLW along priority value chains based on a survey of value chain actors and field observations, as well as an analysis of national legislation and policies relating to FLW prevention and management.



The inception mission identified apples as a product particularly vulnerable to food loss in Azerbaijan, along with bread, potatoes, tomatoes and onions.

In Azerbaijan, a legal analysis has been conducted by a recruited consultant. An inception mission for value chain assessment has been completed and field missions for in-depth FLW analysis in selected value chains (bread, potato, tomato, apple and onion) are ongoing. A national stakeholder validation workshop is scheduled for the first week of February 2022.

In Uzbekistan, a legal analysis has been completed and an inception mission has been undertaken on order to conduct a value chain assessment. The field mission started in November 2021. In Kyrgyzstan, the inception and field missions for value chain assessment have been completed and the draft report is currently under review by the FAO project team. In Turkmenistan, the legal analysis is ongoing and the inception mission and field mission for value chain assessment have been finalized.

## A comprehensive training series on the measurement, monitoring and reporting of FLW

The project conducted comprehensive training on measurement, monitoring and reporting of food losses for key national stakeholders in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The training aimed at supporting countries in developing effective FLW reduction strategies and monitoring their progress towards achieving SDG target 12.3.



Reliable data facilitate the development of food loss reduction strategies.

Curbing FLW can only be truly effective if the related efforts are informed by a solid understanding of the problem. While significant work has been undertaken to measure FLW, data remain scarce, scattered and of unknown quality or limited representativeness.

To support Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in overcoming the challenges facing data collection and forming effective solutions towards reducing FLW, FAO organized a three-day training course for relevant national stakeholders. The three sessions took place on 26 October, 9 November and 7 December 2021. The training participants, consisting of government representatives and statisticians, learnt to identify data needs and priorities, explored available methods and tools for food loss data collection, and discussed complementarity among different instruments.

The training also introduced and discussed ways to integrate and compile the Food Loss Index, a tool developed by FAO to measure progress towards achieving SDG target 12.3.1. All participants in the FAO workshop series expressed an interest in applying the expertise gained to support data collection at the national level.

### The first Crop Festival held to increase awareness of FLW was organized in Izmir, Turkey

Globally, around 14 percent of food produced is lost between harvest and retail, while an estimated 17 percent of total global food production is wasted (11 percent in

households, 5 percent in the food service industry and 2 percent in retail).



The First Crop Festival in Izmir, Turkey

While we throw away food, more than 800 million people around the globe suffer from chronic food deprivation every day. Farmers discard a significant share of their crop before it even leaves the field due to factors beyond their control, such as produce not meeting supermarket standards for size and shape, or inaccurate forecasts by retailers regarding the amount of produce they will buy. These factors and others leave farmers with excess crops on their hands.

One major area for action in efforts to reduce food loss is developing better food harvest mechanisms and practices. Gleaning is one of the most widely known practices for gathering unharvested food from fields – food which is then donated to local food banks and shelters.

To highlight this issue and to mark the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, FAO, in partnership with Aegean Exporters' Associations and Konak District of the Izmir Provincial Directorate of Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, organized the "First Crop Festival" in a series as part of the Save Your Food campaign.

The festival, held on 25-26 September in Izmir, Turkey, aimed to increase people's understanding of food waste reduction by directly encouraging the "rescue" of fresh, surplus fruits and vegetables from farms that would be otherwise wasted, and to ensure their redistribution.

The two-day event included a virtual panel under the theme "No Food Left Behind", laying out common challenges and barriers to food loss and waste reduction, and a gleaning activity.

## **Regional Conference on FLW Reduction in Central Asia, Azerbaijan and Turkey explored new solutions to food loss and waste**

On 29 September 2021, the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, FAO, Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Regional Coordination Centre for Food Security of the Economic Cooperation Organization held a joint conference to reflect on existing challenges pertaining to food loss and waste in Azerbaijan, Central Asia and Turkey, and to take stock of actions urgently needed to reduce FLW.

The conference urged national governments in the subregion to support necessary policy changes and to adopt adequate regulatory mechanisms to create a conducive environment for other partners to act for the reduction of food loss and waste.

In his opening speech, Viorel Gutu, FAO Subregional Coordinator for Central Asia and FAO Representative in Turkey, explained that "policymakers should create an enabling framework, including policy and regulatory mechanisms that incentivize other players to take concrete actions to reduce food loss and waste".

Mr Gutu's statement was seconded by Ahmet Volkan Gungoren, Regional Programme Coordinator for the Regional Coordination Centre, who noted that: "Reduction of food loss and waste is a key topic for policy design and interventions", and that "a joint response is required to address this challenge".

By showcasing best practices and success stories, the conference also aimed to inspire multi-disciplinary, solution-driven collaboration among public, private and civil society actors within and between countries. Realizing and enhancing the positive impacts of reducing FLW requires good governance and all players working together in a coherent manner.

Representatives of FAO and the Ministry shared recent developments in the area of FLW reduction in the subregion, including the implementation of key elements of the Turkish National Strategy and Action Plan for Food Loss and Waste Prevention and Reduction and country-specific analyses of causes and impacts of FLW in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Invited speakers from different sectors presented inspiring cases and innovative and technological solutions, ranging from legal advances facilitating food donations and date labelling improvements to nanoengineered food packaging and a technology-based platform for surplus food management.

## **Training on gender concepts and gender equality principles in FLW and value chains in Azerbaijan**

A two-day online workshop was organized in Baku, Azerbaijan on 20-21 October 2021 in collaboration with FAO Azerbaijan to raise awareness of gender equality principles in FLW and to strengthen national counterparts' knowledge related to integrating gender concerns into FLW interventions.

The main purpose of the workshop was to raise awareness of the concepts of gender equality, Azerbaijan's national and FAO's commitments, and to present the current situation of rural women in the country. Despite their important role in food value chains in Azerbaijan, rural women often face specific constraints in accessing essential productive resources, services and information, and in participating in decision-making. These constraints affect their ability to fully contribute to and benefit from food loss reduction.

Twenty-four participants (more than half of which were women) attended the workshop, representing public institutions, international organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the field of food value chains and food waste in Azerbaijan. They included representatives of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Independent Consumers Union (ICU), the Women's Entrepreneurship Development Association, the Packaging Association of Azerbaijan, the Food Safety Agency, the Agrarian Research Centre, GIZ, USAID and FAO Project Staff

## **Improving national food safety systems and regional cooperation**

### **Regional workshop explores "How can governments better prepare for and respond to a food safety crisis?"**

Four regional workshops were planned under the project, the first of which entitled "Preparing for emergencies: Food safety crisis management, response, and communication" took place on 24-26 November 2021. The three-day technical workshop aimed to establish a strong foundation for food safety risk communication during regular times as well as crises. The workshop aimed to enhance emergency preparedness and crisis management capacities in all project countries by focusing on principles and basic concepts, and exploring potential situations through simulation exercises.

The workshop, which was convened virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions, provided an interactive platform to discuss issues related to food safety in depth, through a series of technical expert presentations and working group discussions. It also highlighted the importance of establishing appropriate food safety risk communication mechanisms, even in the absence of a food safety crisis, as food safety authorities need to provide constant and

effective communication to food businesses, consumers and the media, among others.

#### Project at a glance

**Title:** Improving national food safety systems and regional cooperation – GCP/RER/062/TUR

**Objective:** Strengthen official food safety controls and risk communication in recipient countries, providing an enabling environment for public and private sectors to address priority food safety risks

**Target countries:** Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkey

**Duration:** 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2023

**Budget:** USD 650 000

Workshop participants had an opportunity to discuss national gaps and priority areas for improvement, with a focus on key ways to enhance interactions between official agencies and food businesses in the context of food safety emergencies. In addition, the workshop provided participants with a platform to exchange knowledge and establish networks for further cooperation at the regional level.

## The ECO-RCC project supports improving capacities

**Duration of the project has been extended to 31 December 2022**

With the agreement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey, on 5 July 2021 the duration of the project was extended for one year to 31 December 2022.

#### Project at a glance:

**Title:** Support for the transformation of ECO-RCC from a project-based organization to a sustainable organization of ECO-GCP/SEC/017/TUR

**Objective:** To strengthen ECO-RCC's capacity to provide systematic and useful support to member countries to enable them to acquire the necessary advice, guidance and information to improve their food security and nutrition policies and programmes

**Target countries:** ECO member countries

**Duration:** 1 January 2020 – 31 December 2022

**Budget:** USD 500 000

## A new trilingual website bolsters the regional exchange of information and communication

The Economic Cooperation Organization Regional Coordination Centre for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS) has recently updated its website with the aim of bolstering the regional exchange of information and communication. The website will provide up-to-date information on the activities of the ECO-RCC in English, Russian and Turkish.

One of the new features of the website is a section dedicated to "Data & Statistics" from which users can

extract data and statistics on food security in ECO member countries based on the four pillars of food security, namely: availability, access, utilization and stability. Publications on food security developed by ECO-RCCFS as well as by other organizations including FAO, will also be available on the website for use by decision-makers and agri-food professionals. The website can be accessed at [www.ecorccfs.org](http://www.ecorccfs.org).

## Leaving no one behind: greater involvement and empowerment of rural women in Turkey and Central Asia

A new project has just been launched under FTTP to empower rural women through sustainable economic opportunities, the creation of an enabling policy environment, and improved access to knowledge and skills.



Evidence from FAO indicates that gender-based inequalities are to a large extent responsible for the underperformance of the agriculture sector.

Women are important contributors to agriculture and food production. They also take care of their families and households, look after kitchen gardens and small livestock, and prepare agricultural products for home consumption or for sale. If rural women also collect fuel and water, their daily workloads are further increased. Such responsibilities together with work performed often go unrecognized and uncompensated.

#### Project at a glance

**Title:** Leaving No One Behind: Harnessing Opportunities for Economic Growth through the Greater Involvement and Empowerment of Rural Women in Turkey and Central Asia – GCP/SEC/018/TUR

**Objective:** Empowering rural women and improving rural livelihoods through a two-fold approach: policy and grassroots interventions

**Target countries:** Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan (with other countries of Central Asia and Europe to join regional events for the exchange of best practices)

**Duration:** 1 October 2021 – 30 September 2024

**Budget:** USD 950 000

Rural women also face barriers in access to various resources that can improve their economic status. Among

these are property (including land), decent employment opportunities, and access to technologies, credit, information and skills.

The project will help rural women in Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan gain knowledge and skills to improve their economic status, and start businesses and cooperatives, while empowering them to become agents of change in their communities.

The project will also contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for rural women's economic empowerment, by developing the capacities of policymakers and practitioners to formulate evidence-based, socially inclusive and gender-responsive policies in agriculture and food security, and supporting institutional frameworks to translate these policies into action on the ground.

The project will create a regional platform where the ministries of agriculture of Turkey, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will share gender-based challenges, best practices and policy solutions.

## About the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programmes

The objectives of the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programmes are to provide support to ensure food security, rural poverty reduction and sustainable forest management, combat desertification and preserve ecosystems in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and other countries of mutual interest.

Established in 2007, the first phase of the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme on Food and Agriculture (FTPP) has benefited from trust fund contributions totalling USD 10 million, financed by the Government of Turkey and represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

During the first phase of the programme, 28 projects were implemented in 16 countries between 2009 and 2015.

In 2014, Turkey and FAO commenced the second phase of the FPPP along with the first phase of the FAO-Turkey Forestry Partnership Programme (FTFP) with additional fund of USD 20 million, bringing Turkey's total contribution to USD 30 million.

Under this new phase, a range of projects will be implemented in the areas of:

- food security and nutrition
- agricultural and rural development
- protection and management of natural resources
- agricultural policies
- food safety
- sustainable forests, land and natural resource management and land degradation neutrality
- institutional reform, training and national capacity enhancement.



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
AND FORESTRY

This publication has been developed under the project "Enhancing the Visibility of FAO-Turkey Partnership Programmes (FTPP II & FTFP)-GCP/SEC/020/TUR" funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey.

### Contact information:

FAO Subregional Office for Central Asia  
SEC-SRC@fao.org  
<https://www.fao.org/in-action/fao-turkey-partnership/>  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  
Ankara, Turkey



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