



IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY FOR FARMERS IN AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan wishes to promote organic farming, as demand for organic products is growing every year on both the domestic and export markets. The natural soil and climatic conditions are favourable for organic farming in the country, while the existence of scientific and educational institutions in the agrarian sector and experienced farmers in the regions may provide a suitable environment for promoting organic agriculture in the country. Despite the country's significant agricultural potential, agricultural productivity and its profitability vary widely across the regions. Although the country's agricultural sector contributes around 6 percent to GDP, the lack of modernization means that productivity remains low, mainly due to low rainfall, scarcity of arable land, fragmented landholdings and serious degradation of natural resources in terms of soil erosion, salinity, loss of soil fertility and organic matter. There was therefore an urgent need to development organic agriculture in the country by harmonizing national legislation with the international organic production standards and procedures.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project set out to build capacities in organic agriculture and strengthen the sector in the following ways: (i) evaluate the current state of activities related to production, processing, inspection and certification, data collection and marketing of organic agrifood products, (ii) assess the strategies relating to organic agriculture at national level and improve the National Strategy, (iii) identify priority crops and regions with competitive advantages, (iv) make amendments/revisions to the law and technical regulations for harmonization with international legislative acts and (v) train farmers, technicians and other stakeholders to respond the changes introduced and to provide sustainability in promoting organic agriculture.

IMPACT

Farmers, agricultural and extension specialists from the government ministries concerned, both in headquarters and in the regions, as well as local administrators and private sector representatives are now well trained and capable of providing support for the further development of organic agriculture. Demonstration plots, training materials, technical regulations were widely adopted and are set to be used in future promotion of organic agriculture. As part of Azerbaijan's roadmap for 2017 to 2020, the promotion of organic agriculture is stated as a priority.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

EUR 299 573

Duration

January 2015 – April 2018

Resource Partners

Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock; Government of Republic of Turkey

Partner

Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan

Beneficiaries

Farmers and small farming households in rural areas, farmers' organizations and small manufacturing enterprises

ACTIVITIES

- Current status of organic agriculture and value chain constraints of organic products assessed.
- Data collection system based on harmonized codes, including market data, discussed with stakeholders and report presented, in order to monitor and develop the markets proposed.
- Awareness-raising campaigns organized for consumers and opinion groups in Baku, Shamkir and Ganja.
- Existing agriculture inspection and certification system, as well as the mandates and current functions of all relevant institutions, evaluated. Proposals for improvement of the overall institutional organization and inspection-certification system developed, discussed and a final document offering different options presented to the Ministry of Agriculture.
- A National Organic Agriculture Strategic Plan and short-term Action Plan drafted and presented to the Government.
- Two study tours to Turkey organized for four selected experts to gain experience in the area of organic agriculture.
- Organic Agriculture Documentation Centre established, equipped and training on access to international databases provided in March 2018.
- Around 240 farmers, technicians, entrepreneurs and representatives of the Government of Azerbaijan trained in organic agriculture.
- 28 participants from government ministries, the Azerbaijan Standardization Institute, local administrators, the private sector and universities trained for a total of 8 days as inspectors for organic agriculture.
- A pilot demonstration plot of 10 000 square metres established at the Vegetable Research Institute and a rotation programme managed organically since 2015.



Project Code

FAO: GCP/AZE/006/TUR

Project Title

Development of organic agriculture and institutional capacity building in Azerbaijan

Contacts

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