Uzbekistan and FAO

Partnering for sustainable production intensification and food security

The partnership between Uzbekistan and FAO has been evolving since the country joined the Organization in 2001, and it was recently strengthened with the opening of a Representation in 2014 and the signing of a Host Country Agreement. Delivered through national as well as regional projects, technical assistance has covered a wide range of areas, including diversification of cropping systems, livestock production and disease control, locust control activities and increased fisheries production. Sustainable natural resources management and organic agricultural production are further features of current cooperation.

Matching FAO’s expertise to Uzbekistan’s development priorities

FAO’s assistance in Uzbekistan is shaped by the 2014-2017 Country Programming Framework (CPF), which centres on five thematic priority areas:

- Diversification of cropping systems and sustainable production intensification, with a view to supporting the development of sustainable high-value crop production for domestic and export markets
- Promotion of efficient locust control techniques, integrated pest management (IPM), conservation agriculture and other good agricultural practices
- Livestock production and disease control, and beekeeping, with a view to minimizing risks from brucellosis and other transboundary animal diseases and hazards, increasing animal production and improving beekeeping and poultry production
- Aquaculture and inland fisheries development, with a view to supporting sustainable increases in inland fish production
- Sustainable natural resource management, including development of the forestry sector, increased income-generating opportunities for rural populations, promoting sustainable land management, improving water resource use for sustainable irrigated agriculture, and proactive drought risk management

Jointly prepared with the Government and other partners, the CPF reflects relevant national policies and strategies while supporting FAO’s corporate strategic objectives and regional priorities. It is fully aligned with the new UN Development Assistance Framework for Uzbekistan for 2016-2020.

Strengthened country focus

The FAO-Uzbekistan partnership was recently boosted with the June 2014 opening of an FAO representation in Tashkent. A related Host Country Agreement was signed between FAO and the Government, and the office premises were officially inaugurated by Uzbekistan’s Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev and FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva. In this initial period, FAO’s Subregional Office for Central Asia is strengthening the newly opened office’s operational capacity to implement activities under the Country Programming Framework for Uzbekistan.

These important developments are expected to meet the increasing demands of a growing FAO programme, which is conducted in close coordination with UN agencies and counterparts to ensure an effective implementation process.

Good practices and quality assurance systems

Uzbekistan and FAO are working together to strengthen the country’s legal framework for the development and promotion of sustainable agro-food quality assurance systems in Uzbekistan. Activities are underway to strengthen national capabilities for organic agriculture, good agricultural practices (GAPs) and quality assurance systems. Legislative amendments have been proposed and strategic development plans elaborated. Training sessions and demonstrations, supplemented with manuals addressing specific local conditions, have targeted farmers, researchers, programme managers and technicians. Immediate results will include an enabling legal framework and the validation of organic farming and GAP techniques by a core group of farmers. The next step will be the scaling up of the project to other districts. A key outcome should be the application of sustainable land, water and environmental management practices, which will further increase the potential of organic agriculture in Uzbekistan. Trade will be stimulated through the harmonization of the national legislation with international rules and regulations.

CONTACTS

Yuriko Shoji
Subregional Coordinator for Central Asia and FAO Representative to Uzbekistan
Ivedik Cad. No 55 Yenimahalle
Ankara, Turkey
Tel: +90 312 307 9500
E-mail: FAO-SEC@fao.org
Support to sustainable crop production intensification

FAO recently stepped up its efforts to promote Conservation Agriculture (CA) in the Central Asian subregion, aiming to protect fragile ecosystems and ensure more sustainable production systems. Financed by the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme, a project on conservation agriculture successfully expanded and promoted sustainable crop production practices in Uzbekistan as well as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

Delivery of CA field equipment and training allowed the demonstration of no-till technology in combination with residue-retaining techniques and diversified cropping systems. Regional workshops were conducted, including field days in Uzbekistan. In addition, the project’s national personnel contributed to a major study on the status of CA in the subregion.

Another FAO-funded project sought to prevent the occurrence and spread of new quarantine pests in the region by improving the capacity of specialists and decision-makers on surveillance of phytosanitary services, pest risk analysis, new phytosanitary procedures and international standards.

FAO experts and project beneficiaries reviewed the national phytosanitary legislation with the aim of aligning it with international conventions. Inspectors were trained on international standards, legislations and trade of plant and plant products with hands-on practice focusing on assessing phytosanitary risks and diagnosing pest attacks. By adopting these practices and standards, countries in the region improved their resilience to changing environmental factors and strengthened their position in international trade.

A dynamic seed industry requires a sound regulatory framework to ensure that farmers are able to access high quality seed for superior varieties of priority crops. With the aim of strengthening and harmonizing seed legislation and seed trade in Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan, FAO has been working with member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). In collaboration with national stakeholders in Uzbekistan, FAO technical specialists prepared a draft seed policy document for submission to the Government. A Regional Seed Agreement is also being developed to harmonize regulatory frameworks and technical procedures. The project is funded by the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme, with a contribution from ECO countries.

Coping with water scarcity

Under the FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme, FAO has promoted the implementation of irrigation water-saving technologies for increased water productivity in the Uzbek part of the Podshaota small transboundary river basin, while contributing to the intensification of fruits and vegetables production.

Following an in-depth assessment of the availability of water resources as a basis for improved decision-making regarding the allocation and use of water resources in the targeted area, a set of cost-effective irrigation water-saving technologies were demonstrated. Informative materials were produced to increase farmers’ knowledge and skills in the operation and maintenance of the technologies.

Sustainable natural resources management

With a view to protecting and conserving regions with fragile desert and forest ecosystems, FAO recently stepped up its activities to promote sustainable natural resource management, which is among the key areas of cooperation with Uzbekistan.

Funded by FAO and GEF, the second phase of an intervention for drought-prone and salt-affected agricultural production landscapes in Central Asia and Turkey (CACILM II) is scaling up integrated natural resource management approaches in Central Asia and Turkey. The intervention involves the development and implementation of mechanisms that minimize pressure and negative impacts on natural resources while reducing risks and vulnerability and enhancing capacities to cope with drought and salinity.

Jointly implemented by FAO, Michael Succow Foundation for the Protection of Nature, the University of Greifswald and national partner institutions, the Central Asian Desert Initiative (CADI) rests on long-term government commitment to conservation and sustainable use of Central Asia’s cold winter deserts. The project – scheduled to start in 2016 and continue until the end of 2019 – will be coordinated with other regional initiatives, in particular CACILM II. It will highlight the value of the ecosystem functions of cold winter deserts of Central Asia. With the final goal of developing an overarching forest information management system for sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan, an FAO technical cooperation project on “Integrated Forest Land and Tree Resources Assessment” is to develop professional capacities for generating reliable data on forest land and tree resources. It will also introduce a new data collection system to improve transparency and consistency that helps reporting in international standards. The project’s implementation is planned for 2016-2017.