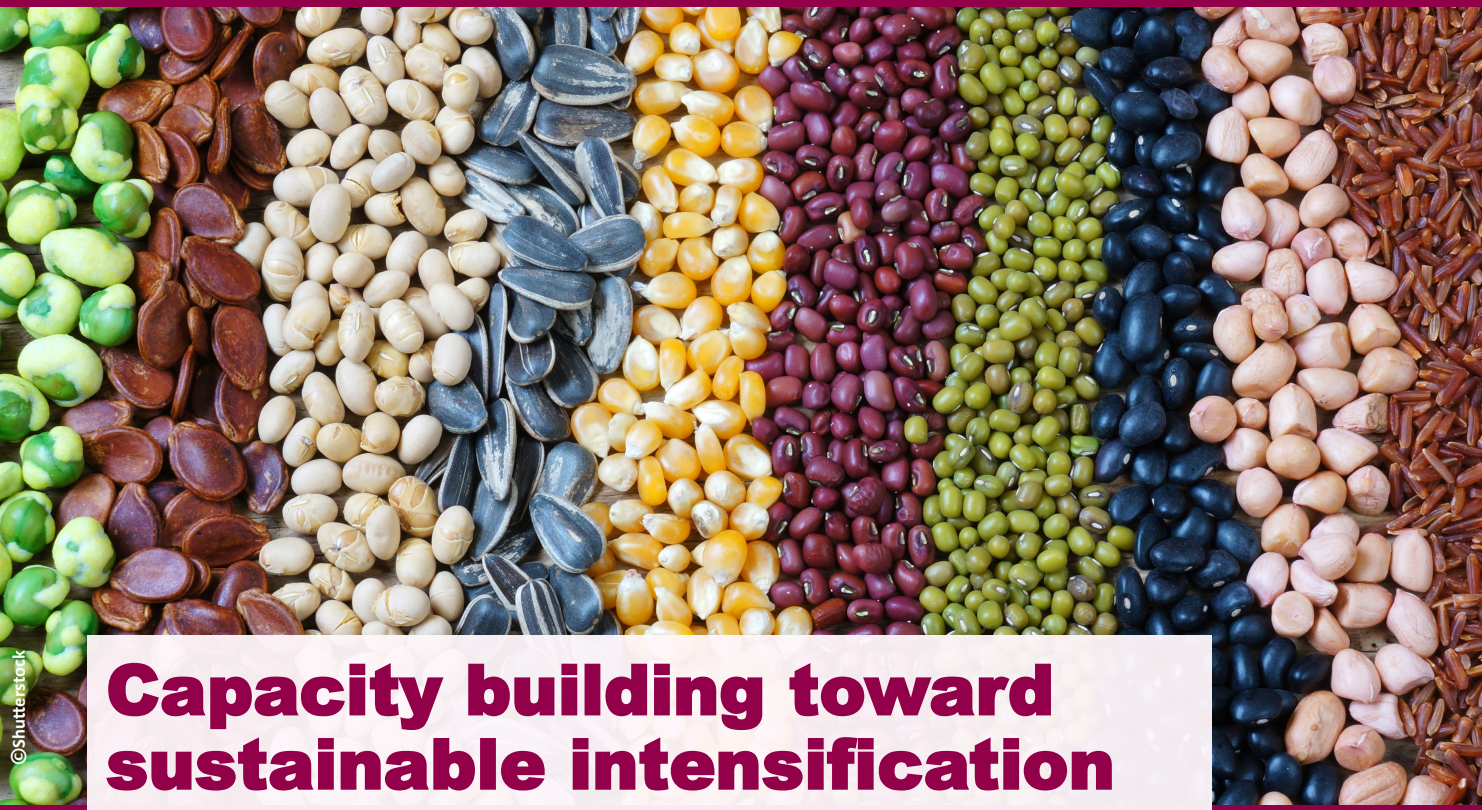
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



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Capacity building toward sustainable intensification of oilseed crops in the Islamic Republic of Iran

To enhance national food security through vulnerability reduction concerning vegetable oil

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The Islamic Republic of Iran imports approximately 95 percent of its vegetable oil and protein cake, making it highly vulnerable to trade barriers and disruptions.

Taking this into account, the country has prioritised an increase of oilseed crops production to reduce the current import levels.

Besides providing a nutritious component of the human diet, oilseed crops production also supplies precious by-products including protein concentrates that are of critical importance as livestock feed for poultry, dairy, lamb, beef, fish, etc. These by-products are in high demand, and their importation is expensive.

The country has taken steps to revitalise its national efforts on oilseed crops, focusing particularly on soybean, as an attractive rotational crop that has not only a relatively higher yield but could also add sustainability and resilience to irrigated wheat systems.

Expected Results

Further to the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) funds and implements a Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to assist the country in building capacity to harness innovations in sustainable oilseed crop production and integrate new technologies and conservation agriculture approaches into cereal-based systems in the country.

FAO'S CONTRIBUTION

As the United Nation's specialised agency leading global efforts to develop sustainable food and agricultural production, FAO offers technical supports to its member countries to strengthen national capacities to improve the overall situation of their food and nutrition security.

To this end, the Organization provides member states with the requisite expertise to reduce their vulnerability concerning the strategic products that are almost entirely supplied via importation, given the fact that any disruption in global food trade may pose a considerable risk to the countries.

In this regard, in close collaboration with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, FAO focuses on further improvement of the country's capacities along the oilseeds value chain. This joint effort covers a number of areas including the exchange of germplasm, knowledge sharing regarding soybean (as well as rapeseed, sunflower, safflower, sesame, and groundnut) breeding techniques, implementation of the state-of-the-art irrigation procedures, and provision of soybean and groundnut inoculants as well as no-till grain drills, planters, and crop sprayers.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Facilitating the alliance with leading global agricultural research institutes for capacity building.
- Conducting value chain analysis on five oilseed crops, with particular emphasis on soybean.
- Training and mentoring national soybean breeders on the development of breeding populations adaptable to specific conditions in major growing agro-ecologies.
- Fine-tuning the soybean agronomic practices in targeted provinces with emphasis on conservation agriculture approaches.
- Assisting the country in acquiring elite oilseed crop germplasms to expand genetic base for crop improvement.

Main partner

This project is being implemented in close partnership with the Department of Cotton and Oilseed of the Ministry of Agriculture Jahad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the national counterpart of the project which has the overall responsibility for the management and planning for oilseed crops in the country.

Budget

FAO allocates USD 60 000 for the Phase II of this TCP project to mobilise global expertise in supporting the Iranian national efforts to further capacity building toward sustainable intensification of oilseed crops production in the country.

Contact

FAO Representation in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Email: FAO-IR@fao.org | Website: www.fao.org/iran | Twitter: @FAOIran

Tel: +98 21 22413803 | Fax: +98 21 22173836

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Tehran, Iran

Department of Cotton and Oilseed
The Ministry of Agriculture Jahad

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