

# Improving food safety in honey and apricots to boost exports

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The overall objective of this project is to improve the competitiveness and export potential of apricot and honey value chains in Tajikistan. The project will focus on enhancing food safety practices in these value chains through improved understanding and management of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines, which will reduce the risk of contamination in processed foods and improve the food safety and quality. Thus, the project aims to increase linkages along the sector value chain and national, regional and international export markets.

## **STDF/PG/447**

### **Status**

On-going

### **Start Date**

01/04/2018

### **End Date**

28/02/2021

### **Project Value (US\$)**

\$1,053,196

### **STDF Contribution (US\$)**

\$786,121

### **Beneficiaries**

Tajikistan

### **Implementing Entities**

International Trade Centre (ITC)

### **Background**

Despite the high potential of agricultural products in the international markets, Tajikistan faces many challenges regarding the compliance with international requirements. These include duplication of safety control on food products, fragmented surveillance of agricultural value chains and lack of coordination between agencies.

Many studies revealed issues in terms of excessive use of pesticides for plant protection purposes, low quality of pesticides available and the consequent food safety issues. Linkages were also made between residues of pesticides and local public health. Tajikistan lacks an efficient registration system for pesticides, an effective monitoring system and laboratories, as well as appropriate data on the residues of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines in the food and feed products. Building upon these findings, this project was designed through a PPG that allowed to identify the needs, the capacity gaps and the priority areas where to address them as highlighted in the National Food Safety Strategy (NFSS). Following an inter-ministerial working group, ITC facilitated the establishment of the NFSS.

Tajikistani dried apricots sector is one of the leading sectors in terms of export. It faces compliance issues related to lack of certificates and lack of proper monitoring and traceability systems, in addition to excessive MRLs on pesticides and veterinary medicines found in the final products. These issues burden the access to high value markets, including the European Union and the Gulf countries.

The honey also appears to have high potential of growth and favourable external market opportunities. The appropriate veterinary medicines for bee diseases are one of the challenges regarding honey production, in addition to

the use of unauthorised/inappropriate products, the safety of the bee keeper in applying the product and the potential environmental impact. Excessive MRLs levels were also found in honey products, resulting in border rejections in neighbouring countries.