



Enabling market access for agricultural products through improved food safety systems

The overall goal of this project is to improve the export competitiveness of Tajik Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises with a particular focus on the apricot and honey sectors. 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 food safety and quality.

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)

Partners

Ministry of Economic Development and Trade

Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population

Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Agency on Standardization, Metrology, Certification and Trade Inspection - Tajikistandard

Dehkan Farm Association of the Apricot Growers of Asht District

National Association of Small and Medium Businesses

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Background

The agricultural sector in Tajikistan employs around 64% of the country's population. Agriculture is in a leading position for the

country's economic growth and the value added in the sector contributes to 28% of the GDP. The tendency over the past 10 years is growth in the production of fruits and vegetables sector, also benefitting from strong government support. The main export markets for food and agricultural products are the Russian Federation, Turkey, the EU and other Central Asian states.

Favourable climatic conditions, good water supply, and fertile soil enable the production of high-quality fruits and vegetables, particularly in the Northern Sughd and Southern Khatlon regions. Apart from fruits (apricots, peaches, apples, lemons and cherries), farmers in the country cultivate almonds, pistachios, onions and cotton.

However, despite favourable conditions for agricultural production, the sector still faces market access barriers related to food safety. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME) face huge challenges in gaining international certification, especially in agribusiness. Whilst the basic regulatory framework for sanitary and phytosanitary standards is in place, due to lack of funds, capacity and organisation, Tajikistan's agricultural products are often not in compliance with international standards. This is a major barrier to exporting through formal channels.

This project will enable market access for Tajik agricultural products through improved food safety systems. With a focus on the apricot and honey value chains, the project will incorporate regional and international best practices on sustainable and effective use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines.

Expected Results

Establish and make operational a regulatory system for control of use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines

A legal framework for controlling the use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines will be proposed and modernized. This will be done in close consultation with both public and private stakeholders. To implement the control system for use of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines, an operational risk-based residue monitoring plan will also be designed.

Strengthened capacity of the project beneficiaries on the safe usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines

To enhance the capacity of the beneficiaries, the project will develop an information, education and communication strategy. This will be achieved via development of various materials focussing on information dissemination, such as press release, TV and radio programmes, where the right usage of agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines will be explained. A series of training activities, both for the public sector representatives and private stakeholders will be held. The training for the public officials will help them implement the control system proposed while those for private stakeholders aim to improve the safe use of the agri-chemicals and veterinary medicines.

Access to finance enhanced for SMEs in compliance with SPS measures

Support on access to finance tools will be given to enhance the financial capacity of the producers to accede to the right inputs for safer production and to the processors to accede to the right inputs and technology for safer processing and compliance with international requirements.

Increased linkages along the sector value chain and export markets

The project will ensure that linkages along the sector value chain and with buyers (national, regional and international) are improved to increase export opportunities. A study tour to selected countries will be organised to enhance stakeholder knowledge on markets, buyers' and SPS requirements, good practices and available technology.