

Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector

Promotion of the Sweet Potato and Dairy Value Chains in Western and Central Kenya

Background

The Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector (GIC) in Kenya is part of the global initiative “ONE WORLD - No Hunger” which is implemented in 15 countries in Africa and Asia. The overall objective of the programme is to increase income and productivity of farmers, to promote employment generation in rural areas and to increase regional supply of foods with a special focus on supporting young people and women.

Even though agriculture is the most important sector of the Kenyan economy – it contributes the largest portion to the country’s GDP – many of the farmers are small-holders and practice farming mainly to feed their own families. Young people are not attracted to work or invest in the sector and women traditionally play a minor role when it comes to decision-making or owning an agribusiness.

GIC Kenya Project Objectives:

- Increase income and productivity of at least 100,000 dairy and sweet potato farmers by 30%
- Create 2,000 jobs especially for women and youths in the up- and downstream industries of the two value chains
- Improve regional access to nutritious food
- Promote particularly women and youth with the project support activities

Our approach

GIC Kenya supports the development of the sweet potato and dairy value chains in the counties of Siaya, Bungoma, Kakamega and Homa Bay in Western Kenya and Nyandarua in Central Kenya with the goal to foster a sustainable agricultural development, especially for youth and women. Small-holder farmers are being trained in innovative agricultural technologies (e.g. climate-smart production methods) and financial literacy, and producer and marketing groups are being strengthened through capacity building and organisational support. Across all activities, GIC Kenya aims at increasing its outreach in remote rural areas by applying ICT-based instruments and using media channels like radio and SMS.

Major intervention areas

- Strengthening producer and marketing groups of dairy and sweet potato farmers through training on organizational development, thus improving their access to markets, crucial services and inputs required for increasing their production.
- Development of state-of-the-art training manuals and materials for sweet potato production and dairy farming in cooperation with national and international research organizations and subsequent trainings of farmers in Good Agricultural Practices to increase their productivity. The trainings are based on the national Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) approach (60% practical, 40% theoretical classes).



- Supporting up- and downstream enterprises of both value chains, such as commercial vine multiplication of clean planting material for sweet potato varieties, commercial fodder production to overcome limited availability of high-quality fodder during the dry season, value-addition of milk and sweet potatoes through local cottage industries.
- Promotion of market-oriented agricultural production through financial inclusion and the support of agripreneurship. Farmers are trained in financial literacy and business development and are being linked to financial institutions.
- Using ICT-instruments and different media channels to increase the outreach on all levels of the value chain. Kenya has favourable frame conditions in the ICT sector and more than 90% of the target group own at least simple phones. Through means like bulk SMS and radio many farmers are reached with extension messages on e.g. weather and market information.
- Improving frame conditions of farmers and up- and downstream enterprises through strengthening the lobbyism of producer groups in the counties and supporting the public-private dialogue between producers and enterprises along the value chains and with the county governments.
- Supporting the county governments in domestication of dairy and root or tuber policies and strategies.
- Development of a national curricula for sweet potato production based on the ATVET-approach.

Results in figures

- More than 42,000 sweet potato farmers organized in 750 producer and marketing groups and trained in state-of-the-art sweet potato production. Supported farmers have more than doubled their income and productivity by applying Good Agricultural Practices, planting high-yield varieties of yellow, white, and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and better marketing options.
- More than 180 young farmers trained in commercial vine multiplication of high yielding sweet potato varieties.
- Over 49,000 dairy farmers trained in good animal husbandry practices from 2016 to date, both in theory and practice.
- More than 590 farmers trained in commercial fodder production for sale to dairy farmers.
- More than 520 farmers trained in commercial vine multiplication for sale to sweet potato farmers.
- 2,000 members of dairy co-operatives in Western Kenya trained in financial literacy in 2022 alone.
- More than 6,000 sweet potato farmers trained to act as Village Saving and Loan Associations.
- 3,900 farmers trained on financial literacy to support the transformation of subsistence-based farming towards a market-oriented agricultural production.

Project name	Green Innovation Centres for the Agriculture and Food Sector
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
Political partner	Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives
Implementing partners	National and international research institutions such as International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Kenyan Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), dairy cooperatives, Bukura Agricultural College, Agriculture Improvement Support Service (AGRISS), Anglican Development Service (ADS), CARE International, Community Research in Environment and Development Initiatives (CREADIS), Rural Energy and Food Security Organization (REFSO), Ugunja Community Research Centre (UCRC), Welthungerhilfe (WHH)
Project region	Bungoma, Kakamega, Siaya and Homa Bay counties in Western Kenya Nyandarua county in Central Kenya
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