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DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by:

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Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Fostering Development in the Rural Area of Jalal-Abad Region

Context

Jalal-Abad is the fourth largest province by territory and the second largest by population in Kyrgyzstan. More than 78% of its residents live in rural areas, 43,2% (2021) of which are poor. Poverty is the result of lack of income opportunities, which makes many rural households vulnerable and dependent from remittances.

Due to low productivity and small land plots, farmers do not have access to modern technologies, to financial means for investments and to high-quality input. Only few farmers are integrated in national or international supply chains. Tourism service providers are isolated, service quality is low, and they lack national and international recognition. The local governments are unable to elaborate economic development plans, which meet the needs of the population and can be implemented. The lack of knowledge about their role in enabling the business environment adds up to limited income opportunities for the population.

Nevertheless, the region has a great potential to thrive by developing its agriculture and tourism. With joint forces, producers can improve their agricultural productivity and competitiveness. Applying climate and eco-friendly approaches increase their yields and quality of food and animal feed. As a result, this can pave the way to additional markets, both national and international.

Furthermore, the region's cultural heritage, mountainous landscape, and natural reserves with endemic flora and fauna create good opportunities for developing adventure and green tourism. Active involvement of local communities in economic development planning and establishing public-private dialogues ensures that the economic and social development plans address the needs of the population.

Programme name	Integrated Rural Development Programme
Commissioned by	The European Union; The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Programme region	Kyrgyzstan, Jalal-Abad region
Main partner	Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic
Duration	06.2018 - 03.2024

Our objective

In the Jalal-Abad region of Kyrgyzstan, the population has more income opportunities in agriculture, tourism and related small businesses. Local governments have the capacity to provide need-based conditions for businesses and address the needs of vulnerable groups.

Our measures

Based on Calls for Proposals, expert evaluations and voting by a high-level evaluation committee, we awarded 16 NGOs with 23 Grant Agreements of in total 4.6 Mio Euro. They received support in improving their capacities in various disciplines such as gender equality, green technologies, good governance, and other cross-cutting topics. Based on their Grant Agreements, they developed agricultural supply chains and tourism networks in Jalal-Abad region, and facilitated dialogues for socio-economic planning between local governments, private sector and the civil society.

Together with our partner NGOs, we support local producers in joining into producer groups and cooperatives to share costs for input, to improve quality and increase volumes ready to sell.



L. to r.: Women's startup in Taldy-Bulak village of Bazar-Korgon provides local women with job in confectionary and sewing workshops.

Farmers seeding wheat using the direct sowing method in Bazar-Korgon rayon of Jalal-Abad region.

Pg 4: Women in Seidikum village of Bazar-Korgon district grow vegetables in greenhouses using sustainable agricultural practices.

The modern flour mill installed in Jalgyz-Jangak village of Suzak district.

We provide producers with access to financing for new machinery, high-quality seeds, equipment for processing via newly established revolving funds, into which they pay their tailor-made contributions.

In the tourism sector, we build networks of local tourism service providers and founded a Destination Management Organisation for common marketing via a website, booking and other services. We provide access to financing for equipment, new products and improved service quality. The tourism service providers increase their knowledge through participation in trainings on efficient management, digital marketing, and green tourism practices.

Study tours, ongoing consultations and trainings help the members of these groups and networks to increase knowledge on how to react on demand with new products or improved services, with processing and marketing. These activities enhance overall innovativeness of the sectors in the region, and lead to better competitiveness in national and international markets.

We contribute to strengthening inclusive local economic development planning. Representatives of the business sector, civil society and of local self-governments identify needs, work out solutions and implement prioritized measures. They anchor these public-private dialogues as a planning process in the local parliaments at municipal level. Youth, women, and ethnic minorities and more vulnerable groups like members of poor households and persons with disabilities participate in these processes. We support the implementation of prioritized measures and advise public service providers in management.

Selected results and impacts

Through training and consulting in all matters, our NGO partners are now able to implement similar projects on their own. More than 2,500 farmers joined in producer groups, 750 farmers joined 10 created cooperatives for production and marketing of early onions, bio cotton, maize, wheat, honey, vegetables, canned berries, and wool products. The cooperatives provide farmers with timely and quality inputs and machinery services and microcredit agencies offer affordable loans from revolving funds.

Additionally, agronomists have learned how to provide advice to farmers, and consult farmers on various topics.

Examples from the field



Altynbek Bekzhanov, consultant at Public Fund "Bio Service", Kelte village, Ala-Buka district: "In the framework of the programme, we purchased equipment for a small-sized fodder plant. It will bring an additional benefit to

farmers. While grain costs less, when turned into fodder can be sold at a higher price."



Taalaibek Borubaev, member of the maize producer group, Kelte village, Ala-Buka district: "Previously, we had little information about pests. We saw and knew that there were such insects, but we did not understand how to

get rid of them. The workshops helped us a lot. They taught us how to take care of the crops and treat them with proper fertilizers. We participated in various seminars, some of which happened right here – on the field."

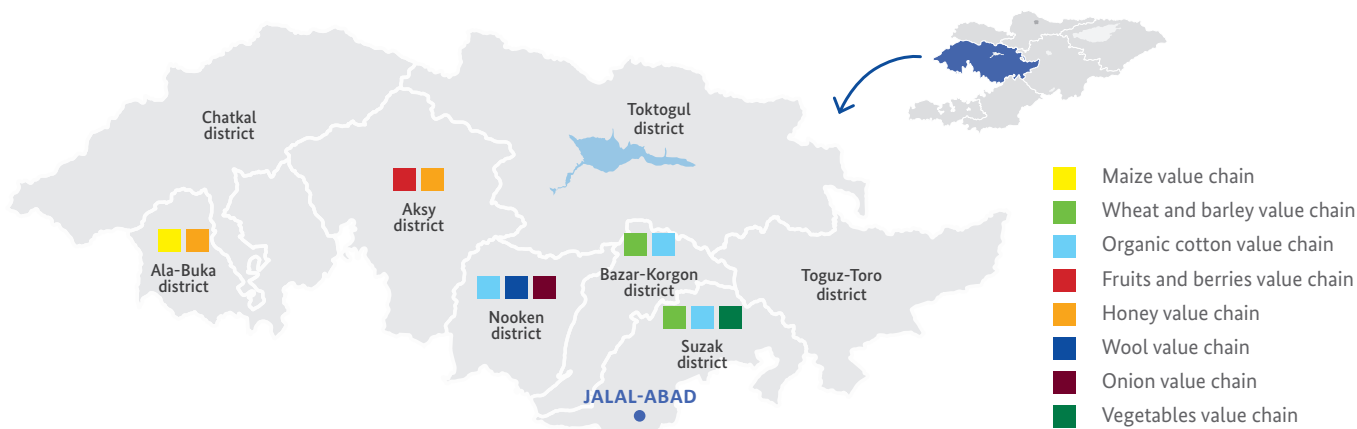


Janybek Borkoshev, coordinator of internal control system of Public Fund "Bio Farmer", Orto-Asiya village, Suzak district:

"The cooperative members follow the standards set by the cooperative: they sow non-

GMO seeds and do not use chemicals. Our cooperation with the project started in 2020. It provides us with the technical support. We bought quality seeds and one new tractor and plan on buying seeders and cultivators."

Programme areas (Jalal-Abad region)



All this helps farmers to increase yields and reduce costs and increase income for their families. For instance, Adilbek Bakirov, a farmer from Jalgyz-Jangak village in Suzak district joined the cooperative in 2020. He participated in multiple trainings and workshops on modern cultivation techniques and no-till technology. In 2022, he used machinery services and purchased seeds through revolving fund. As a result, Adilbek achieved his record yield by the end of 2022 agricultural season. “I used to get 2 tons a year per hectare”, recalls Adilbek. “And this year, I harvested 3,5 tons of wheat per hectare. I could not have imagined before it was possible to get higher yields using much less resources and energy.

Examples from the field



“There is a demand for organic cotton. Many local households cultivate cotton for 15-20 years. Our family uses its 0.6 ha of land for this, – tells Venera Churokova, member of the organic cotton cooperative

“Bio Farmer” from Orto-Asiya village, Suzak district. – There are more cotton bolls and they ripped well this year compared to the harvest of previous years. We have launched our own seed fund (2021) and are distributing the seeds to our farmers. We sell cotton in late autumn and buy food, coal and winter clothes for our children.” The cooperative exports the cotton they have harvested to Germany. About 17% of the cooperative members are women-led households.



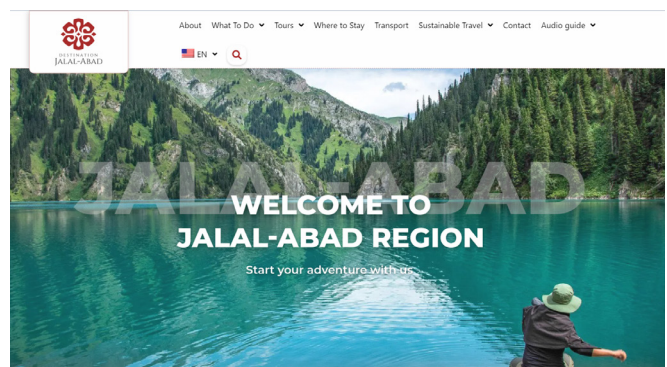
Jyldyzkan Osmonova, head of the “Jany-Jol Asyldary” cooperative from Aksy district: “Our cooperative was formed in 2021. We process natural fruits and berries from our forests. We make jam, compote from

them, e.g. quinces, haws, hawthorns. These are ecologically clean, organic products.”

Tourism service providers united in local tourism networks. 8 of them created the first tourism cooperative and successfully established a yurt Camp.

Two NGOs promoted 38 business projects in tourism, including launching coffee shops, souvenir and artisan shops and improving hygiene conditions in guesthouses. Moreover, three new community-based tourism guesthouses (CBTs) started functioning in Sary-Chelek, Kazarman, and Toktogul. Tourism information centers opened in Sary-Chelek and Jalal-Abad city. 40 tourism signboards across the region have been established in 2019 and now direct visitors to sights and attractions.

The newly founded destination management organisation “Destination Jalal-Abad” unites and strengthens more than 35 tourism service providers across the region. It has presented 15 tour products tailored to the interests of foreign and national tourists. Tourism service providers now receive bundled services from this new Destination Management Organisation. For instance, one might find all-inclusive trekking, horse trek, and cultural tours across the region following the link on the website of the Organisation www.jalal-abad.com.



An example from the field



Uultay Sultanova, tour operator from Jalal-Abad city: “The programme helped us buy a drone and we used it to take beautiful pictures of the places we visited. Thanks to them, the number of our subscribers on social media has

increased dramatically. We now have about 3,000 people in our client base. While in 2019 we aimed to organize tours in the Jalal-Abad region, starting in 2020 we want to change the culture of tourism among the local population.”



L. to r.: Women’s cooperative “Jany-Jol asyldary” in Aksy district produces canned products made from organic berries and fruits.

Baktykan Myrzakulova, welcomes tourists in her guest house Happy Family in Arstanbap village. She learned the digital marketing and efficient management skills and got a driving license.



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In 44 local municipalities, the local governments jointly with the local population have elaborated inclusive economic development plans. Using a participatory approach allows them to tackle economic and social issues for improving the population's well-being. Working groups have been established, their members and representatives of the self-governments have gained knowledge about their tasks and new principles of planning. Various trainings and consultations helped them to implement prioritized measures successfully. As a result, 41 public investments in rehabilitation of irrigation systems, improvement of waste management, veterinary services and other areas were successfully implemented to date.

The impacts of such joint planning activities are being measured and knowledge will be documented and made available to other municipalities.

As a result of these activities, 587 additional income opportunities, measured in Full time equivalents, have been created, 67% for women and 24% for youth.

An example from the field



Samargul Aidaraliev lives in the Kyzyl Ai village of the Bazar-Korgon district. She was elected as a chairperson of the working group on elaborating local economic development plan of the Seidikum municipality. The working group consists of

active citizens representing interests of different population groups. Samargul is one of the women who want to become more informed about the economic development of municipality. They propose their own ideas and participate in their implementation. For instance, in expanding the local bakery so that 5 to 10 more women could work there.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
(German federal enterprise for international cooperation)

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GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

As at May 2023

Printed by

Design Aleksandra Ustinova, Bishkek