



Value Chain Agro
Finance Project

Newsletter

VALUE CHAIN AGRO FINANCE PROJECT IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC IN 2024

*Growing together: Integrating farmers into value chains with
sustainable finance*

Greetings to our valued readers! We are excited to bring you the second edition of our bi-annual newsletter, dedicated to sharing the remarkable progress and achievements of our Value Chain Agro Finance project in Kyrgyzstan. This newsletter serves as a window into the project's initiatives, milestones, and the positive impact it is making in transforming the agricultural landscape of this country.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



4

Project partners were mobilised



5

Value chains are actively supported



2

Processing companies received support in implementing international food quality and safety standards.



3

Food testing laboratories receive assistance in implementing 43 testing methods



51

Capacity-building engagements (trainings, field days, consultations, workshops, etc.)



940

Participants benefited from these engagements

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

PROMOTING SOUND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES OF FARMERS

- Ongoing technical support for vegetable, sugar beet, and potato farmers. Tailored trainings for berry and cereal farmers scheduled for later this year.
- Established collaboration with Dutch seed company HZPC to boost seed potato replication in Kyrgyzstan.
- Completed online trainings on M&E systems; first M&E successfully conducted.
- Partnered with KGFRAS to implement schemes and develop a Quality Control and Certification System for seed potatoes.
- Agriculture Advisory Services provided farmers with fertilizers, plant protection agents, and modern farming technologies.
- Enhanced collaborations to improve production technologies, access to inputs, credit, marketing, and logistics.

SUPPORT FOR PROCESSORS

- Supported implementation of international food quality and safety standards in “Ak-kuu” OJCS and “Bai Organic” LLC: “Ak-kuu” OJCS, Kyrgyzstan's largest egg producer, passed ISO 22000:2018 audit. “Bai Organic” LLC, a vegetable and fruit processor and exporter, passed FSSC 22000 audit.
- Trained food processor personnel on international food quality and safety standards and mentored their teams on implementation.

ENHANCING AGRI-FOOD LABORATORIES



- Validated and budgeted for new equipment and rehabilitation works for state-owned food testing labs, in collaboration with key ministries.
- Provided cooperation agreements to partner laboratories, to ensure smooth collaboration and project success.
- Engaged international experts for know-how transfer and training, aiming to implement 14 new testing methods by year-end.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

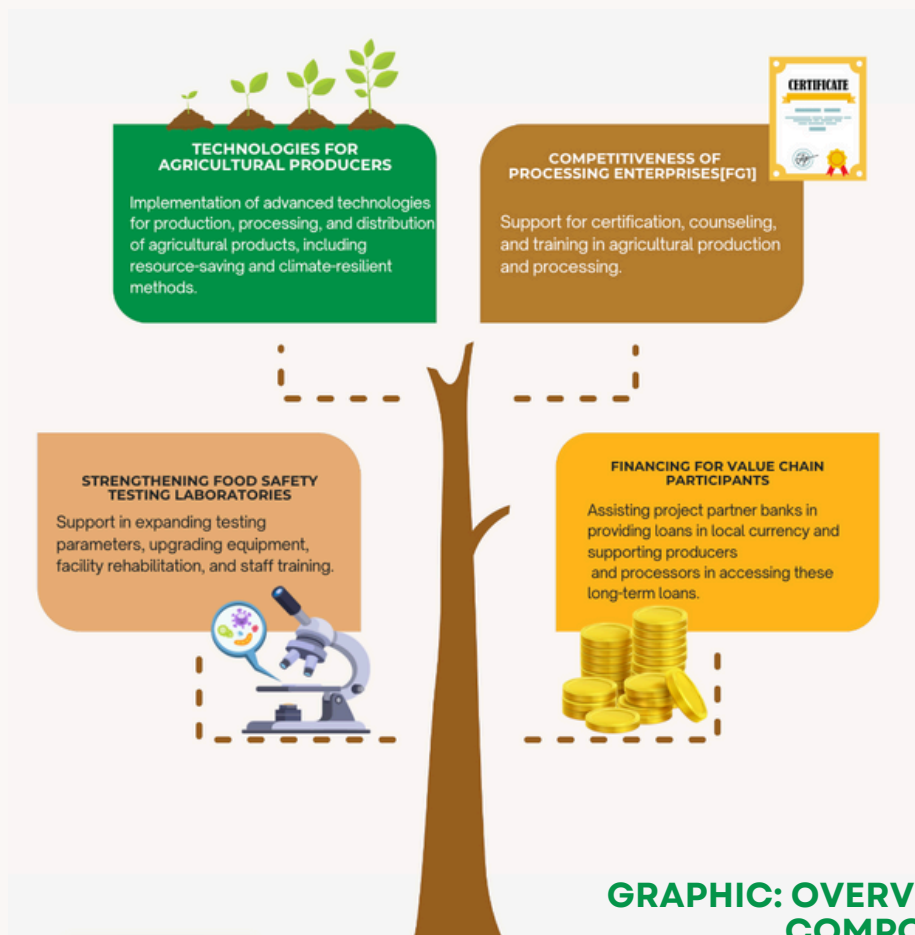
- EIB's due diligence process for selecting partner banks is ongoing
- Developed and shared with the Ministry of Finance and donors process steps on loan disbursement ensuring transparency and cooperation.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Value Chain Agro Finance Project, funded by the EU, EIB, and KfW, is implemented by GOPA AFC with a budget of EUR 37 million from April 2023 to May 2027. The project allocates EUR 31 million for lending to value chain participants, aiming to enhance agricultural practices, support certification, and strengthen food safety testing laboratories.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- **Farmers:** Training in best practices, access to loans, and advanced agricultural technologies.
- **Producers/Processors:** Certification support, access to loans, and training on international standards.
- **Laboratories:** Capacity building, equipment upgrades, and staff training for food safety testing.
- **Project financial support:** support to agriculture value chain stakeholders on accessing long term loans from EIB and KfW funds.



VALUE CHAINS IN FOCUS

VEGETABLES:

Implemented schemes for onions and sweet peppers, offering technical assistance, financial resources and improved marketing logistics.



FRUITS AND BERRIES:

Enhancing berry production and export potential in collaboration with the Berry Growers Association, including capacity building for local berry agronomists and extension service providers.



CEREALS:

Promoted eco-friendly zero-till technology to boost food security by providing access to essential equipment and high-quality seeds.



POTATOES:

Partnered with Dutch seed company HZPC to enhance seed potato replication, introduced a Seed Quality and Certification system, and provided initial training to field specialists and farmers.



SUGAR BEET:

Mobilized 100 farmers, introduced a crop monitoring system, and established strong relations with input suppliers and the sugar factory to ensure stable operations and financing.



COMPLETION OF OUR TRAINING ON NEW TESTING METHODS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD PRODUCTS

We are pleased to announce the successful completion of our training sessions on new testing methods for agricultural and food products.

Among the invited experts was Olga Sergeevna, a PhD in Veterinary Science and Deputy Director for Research at the State Research Institute for Laboratory Diagnostics and Veterinary-Sanitary Expertise (Kyiv, Ukraine). Her extensive experience significantly enhanced the training quality. Olga conducted both theoretical and practical sessions, emphasizing the importance of modern testing methods for food safety and quality.

"The local specialists were very experienced and open to learning new techniques," Olga noted.

"Their enthusiasm and eagerness to apply these methods were truly impressive."

The training covered key topics such as detecting genetically modified organisms, determining residual tetracycline antibiotics using high-performance liquid chromatography, and analyzing fatty acid composition using gas chromatography.

Thanks to Olga's guidance, participants gained valuable skills that will enhance agricultural and food product testing in the region, marking an important step toward improving local expertise and safety standards in the food industry.



SUCCESS IN AGRICULTURE: JUMAMATOV KAMIL AND THE NO-TILL FARMING METHOD

Jumamatov Kamil is a farmer who implemented the innovative no-till farming method on his fields. This approach not only sparked interest among other farmers but also brought Kamil impressive results. The yield from his fields increased significantly compared to the previous year, and production costs were noticeably reduced.



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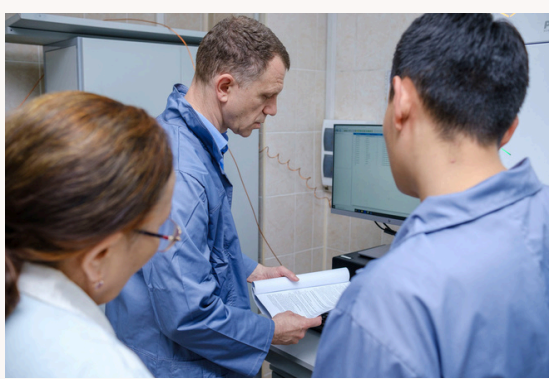
“The no-till method helped me cut down on fuel and time costs. The yield improved, and the soil now retains moisture better,” Kamil shares his experience.

No-till farming minimizes environmental impact and helps adapt to changing climate conditions. Thanks to this method, Kamil has not only increased his profits but also contributed to the sustainable development of agriculture.

SELECTION OF OUR EVENTS

MASTERING TESTING METHODS FOR AGRI-FOOD PRODUCTS

We've started mastering testing methods for agricultural and food products. International experts are providing training at the Bishkek Center for Testing, Certification, and Metrology, covering GMO detection, residual antibiotics, and fatty acid analysis. Key participants included EU Project Manager Bakyt Aituganov, Marika Savatbekova from the Ministry of Finance, and Zhansseitov Shabdan, Director of the Bishkek Center.



ENHANCING THE SUGAR VALUE CHAIN IN KYRGYZSTAN



GOPA AFC team organized a field visit to Kyrgyzstan's "Koshoi" sugar processing plant as part of the EU, EIB, and KfW-funded "Value Chain Agro Finance" project.



The visit included distinguished guests, such as Ambassador Marilyn Josefson of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan, EIB Vice-President Kyriakos Kakouris, and other EU and EIB representatives. They explored the plant's sugar production processes, raw material supply chains, and production strategies.

The project aims to strengthen the Koshoi factory's capacity, efficiency, and competitiveness while supporting 4,000 sugar beet farmers who supply the plant. With KfW and EIB funding, farmers will adopt advanced farming technologies, and Koshoi will upgrade to energy-efficient equipment.



Producing 136,000 tonnes of sugar annually, Koshoi meets domestic demand and exports to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, significantly contributing to economic development and employment in Kyrgyzstan.

"RECOGNITION FROM THE MINISTRY: VALUE CHAIN AGRO FINANCE TEAM'S SUCCESS AT AGROTECHEXPO-2024"



The Value Chain Agro Finance team received a letter of appreciation from the Ministry of Water Resources, Agriculture, and Processing Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic for their active participation in the "AgroTechExpo-2024" exhibition.

From October 18 to 20, 2024, the Republican agro-industrial exhibition "AgroTechExpo-2024" and the "Altyn Kuz" food fair took place at T. Usubaliev Square in Bishkek.

Organized by the Ministry, the event showcased cutting-edge agricultural machinery, processing equipment, innovative technologies, and a diverse range of agricultural products, bringing together participants from across the region.

FOOD SAFETY AND CERTIFICATION TRAINING



From May 22-31, we trained Bai Elim Company LLC in Bishkek on robust food safety and certification systems. Led by Almaz Davletov from GOPA AFC, the sessions covered international certification standards, equipping the company to enhance their food safety measures effectively.

SEED POTATO MONITORING

From July 2-4, in partnership with TES-Centre, we monitored seed potatoes in the Chon-Alai region.

Experts provided recommendations on cultivation, herbicide use, weeding, fertilization, and hilling. Farmers receive technical guidance to ensure agronomic compliance, aiming to boost seed potato quality and productivity.



SWEET PEPPER CULTIVATION: FROM GREENHOUSE TO OPEN FIELD

The sweet pepper season in Kyrgyzstan is progressing actively. From May 25-27, we held monitoring sessions in Nizhne-Chuy and Ak-Bashat with Tes-Center Consulting Company to refine agronomic practices and improve soil preparation. In Nizhne-Chuy, 15 farmers were trained on innovative pepper planting techniques, including soil preparation, drip irrigation, and sunburn protection. Our experts inspected seedlings for diseases and pests, equipping farmers with advanced preventive measures.

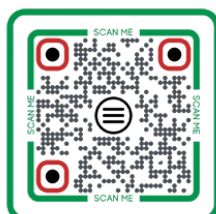




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