



GIZ in Kyrgyzstan

Making development effective



германия
кызматташтыгы
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by:

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH





Welcome! Kosh kelinizder!

Dear readers, partners, and friends,

we are glad to present our new GIZ Kyrgyzstan country brochure 2021. It contains an overview of the activities, results, and achievements of Kyrgyz – German Technical Cooperation projects and programmes.

The cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Germany started 29 years ago. During this long-lasting partnership, we have jointly tackled many challenges and addressed numerous opportunities with the perspective to realize the Agenda 2030 United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals-. With substantial inputs and on behalf of the German Government, the European Union and the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation we are supporting Kyrgyz government in its efforts to alleviate poverty, develop the economy and accelerate reforms. Our innovative approaches, know-how and assistance offer tailored solutions for overcoming problems, strengthening capacity, and for building long-term structures and processes in the country.

In accordance with the Kyrgyz Republic's National Strategy for Sustainable Development, our work focuses on two priority areas: sustainable economic development and health care. Our contribution to the national and international development agenda in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia also addresses topics such as climate change adaptation, natural resource protection, as well as removing of barriers to regional and international trade, promoting vocational education reform and management training, reforming the legal and judicial system, supporting youth in underdeveloped and conflict-prone areas, and establishing a dialogue with local communities on sustainable land use and tourism.

Kyrgyzstan attracts and fascinates many people by its rich culture and vast economic potential situated in a natural environment of astounding beauty. Our aim is to support Kyrgyzstan and its people on its move towards a prosperous, healthy and climate friendly future. In the following pages you will find more in-depth information on our work in various sectors including examples of success stories of our beneficiaries. We hope you enjoy reading.

For any further inquiries please refer to giz-kirgisistan@giz.de or visit our website under <https://www.giz.de/en/weltweit/356.html>.

Sincerely,
GIZ Kyrgyzstan's Management Team

January, 2021

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GIZ Profile

Working to Achieve Sustainable Development

As a service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work, we are dedicated to shaping a future worth living around the world. Together with our commissioning parties and partners, we generate and implement ideas for political, social and economic change.

GIZ works flexibly to deliver effective and efficient solutions that offer people better prospects and sustainably improve their living conditions.

For GIZ, the 2030 Agenda is the overarching framework that guides its work, which it implements in close cooperation with its partners and commissioning parties.

GIZ in Figures

The registered offices of GIZ are in Bonn and Eschborn. In 2019, we generated a business volume of around EUR 3.1 billion. Our 22,199 employees, almost 70 per cent of whom are national staff, work in around 120 countries. As a recognised development service provider, we currently have 556 development workers in action in partner countries. Furthermore, in 2019, the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM), which is run jointly by GIZ and the German Federal Employment Agency, placed 262 integrated experts and 515 returning experts with local employers in our partner countries, or provided them with financial support, advice or other services.*

More information about GIZ worldwide can be found at www.giz.de.



*Personnel and business figures as at 31 December 2019

Kyrgyzstan: Main Facts and Figures

Kyrgyzstan is a post-soviet country in Central Asia, bordering Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The mountainous region of the Tian Shan covers over 80% of the country (Kyrgyzstan is occasionally referred to as “the Switzerland of Central Asia”, as a result), with the remainder made up of valleys and basins. The cultural heritage, the breathtaking mountainous with more than 3,000 alpine lakes (amongst them the Issyk-Kul as second largest alpine lake in the world), diverse flora and fauna provide many opportunities for developing ecotourism.



Kyrgyzstan has been independent since 1991 and a parliamentary republic since 2010. Following a referendum in January 2021, the country is about to adopt a presidential system of government. Ongoing problems with security, characterised by regional, ethnic and weak economic tensions as well as intergenerational conflicts, pose serious challenges to this country. More than a third of the population lives below the national poverty line. Political instability and economic structures curb the prospects of growth. In the area of health care, too, action is needed despite progress. While under-five child mortality has decreased, infant mortality is declining at a much slower rate. Maternal mortality remains high and ranks highest among the 53 countries of the World Health Organization’s European Region.



Capital (and largest city)	Bishkek	Religion	90% Islam, 7% Christianity, 3% Other
Official language/Co-official	Kyrgyz/Russian	Independence	1991
Area total	199,951 km ²	Government	Unitary parliamentary secular constitutional republic
Population (2020 estimate)	6,586,600	GDP total (2019 estimate)	\$35,324 billion
Density	27.4/km ²	Neighbor countries	Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China
Ethnic groups (2019)	73.5% Kyrgyz, 14.7% Uzbek, 5.5% Russian, 1.1% Dungan, 0.9% Uyghur, 0.9% Tajik, 0.7% Turk, 2.7% Other		

GIZ in Kyrgyzstan: Effective Support for Development

GIZ has been implementing projects in Kyrgyzstan since 1992 on behalf of the German government and other commissioning parties – the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Bilateral development cooperation projects in Kyrgyzstan and regional projects in Central Asia are commissioned mainly by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Coordination of the Kyrgyz-German Development Cooperation lies within the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic.

GIZ works mainly in rural areas and regions with lower incomes, in particular in Osh und Jalal-Abad, Naryn and Issyk-Kul. The Country Office is located in the capital Bishkek and further project offices are based in Osh and Jalal-Abad.



In accordance with the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, our work focuses on two priority areas: sustainable economic development and health care. To advance economic development, the country focuses on alleviating poverty, stabilising the economy and accelerating structural reforms. GIZ helps the country to reach these goals by promoting employment and income opportunities for people in rural areas. We support the development of agricultural value chains as well as agrotourism and ecotourism and improve access to financial services and financial education. We also contribute particularly to the transition to a ‘green economy’ and to promoting exports.

In the health sector, our cooperation focuses on improving quality and accessibility of medical care, especially in the area of mother-and-child and primary health. Among other, GIZ assists the Kyrgyz Government with activities to enhance training of health workers, to improve perinatal care and needs-based referral and care for pregnant women and newborns in five regions of the country.

As requested by local political partners and commissioning parties, and according to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals–Agenda 2030, our contribution to development also includes support for the private sector and the removal of barriers to regional and international trade, promotion of vocational education reform and management training, efforts to reform the legal and judicial system, support for youth in underdeveloped and conflict-prone areas, and to establish a dialogue to help local communities in sustainable land use and adaptation to climate change.



*Personnel and projects/programmes as of January 2021

Our Portfolio at a Glance

Sustainable Economic Development: Education, Training and Sustainable Growth for Good Jobs

Promoting Sustainable Economic Development Project

Green Economy and Sustainable Private Sector Development in Kyrgyzstan Project

commissioned by



Prospects for Youth Programme

Promotion of Employment and Vocational Qualification Project

commissioned by



Professional Education in Central Asia – Fostering Systemic Approaches in the Food Processing Sector Project

Trade Facilitation in Central Asia Project

commissioned by



Integrated Rural Development Programme

commissioned by



Health

Promotion of Primary Healthcare in Kyrgyzstan Project

BACKUP Health in Kyrgyzstan Project

commissioned by



Promotion of the Rule of Law

Promotion of the Rule of Law in Central Asia Programme

commissioned by



Promotion of the Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic Programme

commissioned by



Environment and Natural Resources

Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Reduction through Community-based Management of Walnut Forests and Pastures Project

Study and Experts Fund (SFF): Development of Policy Recommendations for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Risks in the Land Use Sector as a Contribution to the Preparation of the Kyrgyz NDCs Project

commissioned by



Sustainable and Climate Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia Programme

Technology Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Rural Areas of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan Programme

Green Central Asia: Cross-border Dialogue on Climate, Environment and Security Issues in Central Asia and Afghanistan Programme

Study and Experts Fund (SFF): Pilot-based Afforestation and Reforestation of Degraded Forest Areas in the Border Area between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan Project

commissioned by



Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

Leave No One Behind

Gender Equality: Supporting Women Empowerment

Innovation and Digitalization: New Digital Solutions for Sustainable Development

Study and Experts Fund (SFF): Localization of the SDGs of the Kyrgyz Republic Project

commissioned by



- Bilateral projects and programmes
- Regional projects and programmes (Central Asia and Afghanistan)



Sustainable Economic Development: Education, Training and Sustainable Growth for Good Jobs



Promoting Sustainable Economic Development

Kyrgyzstan has highly promising conditions for a positive economic transformation, yet valuable resources have been unused, and systemic problems unaddressed. With its favourable climate, the country holds the capacity of sustainably supplying Russia and Europe with various agricultural products. However, three major factors have been preventing from achieving its full export potential: environmental risks, compliance with quality requirements, and internal value chain operation. Greener economic policies and practices could help ensure the sustainability of the country's economic development. Investment and training could allow meeting the standards necessary for export expansion. A well-established internal system of food production and safety could create a stronger backbone for enhanced international trade.

Kyrgyz-German programme on Promotion of Sustainable Economic Development has been focusing on these and related issues to promote employment and create income opportunities. To ensure comprehensive support, the programme has been collaborating with the Kyrgyz Republic Ministry of Economy to introduce green economy policies and to raise awareness of green issues among relevant stakeholders, including government agencies and entrepreneurs. Also, the programme in close cooperation with the German organization Import Promotion Desk has provided local businesses with access to international events in which they could present their products, thus increasing potential international demand.

Funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) the programme has transfigured food production value chains on different levels. For example, the production of dried plums and vegetables in Jalal-Abad region has been remarkably expanded through the introduction of quality assurance systems. The latter, in turn, allowed local products to comply with standards and requirements that need to be met for the businesses to broaden their market.

The improvement of production processes and the expansion of the market have resulted in economic growth, thus confirming the effectiveness of programme approaches. For example, in 2018, Kyrgyzstan exported 60 tons of dried plums to Europe for the first time. These products fully complied with the European standards for organic foods. Also, 5,650 tons of peppers were exported to Russia and Kazakhstan in 2020. Similarly, income has grown in the beef production sector. All this means that more people gained access to high-quality employment and to a more stable income, and businesses have been provided with more opportunities. Moreover, in cooperation with the National Bank of Kyrgyzstan, 68 farmers were trained on finances and received access to financial literacy tools so that they can manage and develop their businesses more successfully. 1,725 people were trained on financial literacy. 24 companies manufacturing processed vegetables and frozen meat have received ISO 22000 and FSSC certifications.



Through the programme, businesses in Jalal-Abad, Osh, Chui, and Issyk-Kul regions have received instruments that will allow them to grow, develop, and have long-term positive effects on the economy of Kyrgyzstan.

 870 farmers apply organic production methods in Plums VAC

 10 strategies Local Economic Development

 3,059 new permanent and seasonal jobs

 37% increase in revenues among more than 170 local businesses

 2,000 people are trained on Financial literacy

Green Economy and Sustainable Private Sector Development in Kyrgyzstan

GIZ, with its extensive and in-depth approach to improving the employment and income situation in Kyrgyzstan, has placed emphasis on the principles of a green economy. In the green economy, growth in income and employments are driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The green of economy does not come through organic production only, but the plastic production and consumption should be reduced, which requires among other measures the sensibilization of population in this regard. GIZ is implementing a Kyrgyz-German project – “Green Economy and Sustainable Private Sector Development in Kyrgyzstan” – in partnership with the Ministry of Economy and on behalf the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Its aim is to introduce green principles into three sectors: fruit and vegetable production, livestock, and tourism.

On the governmental level, we are promoting green economic policies that are in the best interest of the private sector. We are working to coordinate, monitor, and align policymaking with international best practices so that the results are long-lasting and scalable. On the business level we support cultivating and improving green practices like among micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). We are endeavoring to raise the awareness of potential customers and thus contribute to increase demand for sustainably produced products.

The possibilities to promote green economic practices are enormous, and the entire population of the country, 6,300,000 people (as of 2018), can be engaged. Kyrgyzstan has a substantial economic potential to be further integrated into economic activities.

Women, for example, as workforce often restrict their activities to households instead of engaging in businesses. They head only one fifth (19.2 per cent) of all small-scale farms.

Therefore, the project is paying extra attention to reach vulnerable and underprivileged groups of the population: women, young people (between 14 and 34 years of age), and those with disabilities. Besides that, we are providing support to the owners, managers, and employees of approximately 500,000 MSMEs. Although agricultural enterprises constitute only 12 per cent of total enterprises, they employ 30 per cent of the population, most of whom are poor and live in rural areas.



A Success Story: Sustainable Farming for a Greener Economy

In Jalal-Abad region in the south of Kyrgyzstan, most of the local population is engaged in agriculture and cattle breeding. The people grow vegetables, fruits, grains and walnuts. GIZ supports farmers in improving their income sources and in developing the respective value chains. The producers form cooperatives and similar groups to reduce the production costs and save time on sowing and harvesting. GIZ supports them in obtaining agricultural machinery and in procurement of quality seeds, improving knowledge in pest management, as well as in the use of fertilisers and modern sowing methods.

Thanks to these measures, farmers can increase the volume and quality of their crops and improve their long-term economic situation. For example, 1,103 farmer households from different villages in the south of the country introduced plum value chains following all organic production approaches. The economic advantages of the product was evident – in 2018, approximately 260 tons of organic plums were produced and sold by farmers. 366 producers increased their income of by 14% and according to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, farmers benefitted more than 39 thousand Euros. Moreover, 140 seasonal jobs were created and 100 of them are women in rural areas.



Another example is from the Burgondu village – the farmers needed new seeds, modern methods of plant cultivation, new economic ties and improved technical infrastructure. To change the situation, they have established the “Burgondu Cooperative” and engaged agronomists and marketing consultants. As a result, in 2020 they managed to grow and sell an unusually large quantity of Bulgarian peppers – 320 tonnes were shipped to the stalls in Russia. In summer, farmers and their family members harvested the vegetables from sunrise to sunset. It was not easy, because they had to wear medical masks and keep the distance. But excited about the harvest and looking forward to a great income, people in the field sang songs and congratulated each other.



Integrated Rural Development

22.4% of the population in Kyrgyzstan lives below the national poverty line. Out of seven regions, Jalal-Abad is among the poorest, where 32.2% of its population live in poverty. Lack of income opportunities force people to leave to other areas or countries in search for income. Those who stay largely rely on income from agriculture, and few of them from small businesses such as rural tourism. However, due to low productivity and land scarcity, agriculture contributes little to economic well-being of the families. Few farmers are integrated into market-driven supply chains, therefore, struggling to compete in national and international markets. Lack of efficiency in production and processing, among other reasons due to lack of modern technologies and investment add to the low competitiveness. The same applies to the MSME in tourism, being disconnected and not joining forces. Women and youth are even more affected by the lack of income opportunities.



Through Integrated Rural Development Programme, GIZ supports to overcome these shortcomings. Based on Calls for Proposals, we conclude Grant Agreements with NGOs as implementing partners. In onion, maize, organic cotton, wheat and barley value chains, we support farmers in forming producer groups to demand and offer improved services, and apply innovative, "greener" production methodologies. Moreover, we foster MSME in tourism in development of better services and new products, the establishment of "Destination Jalal-Abad" and strengthening community-based tourism. Thus, we increase competitiveness in agriculture and tourism, which leads to more income-generating opportunities, and in the same time build capacity of national NGOs.

Through introduction and anchoring of a process for inclusive local economic development planning, we ensure participation of all groups of the local population in identifying needs for economic development, in working out solutions and in prioritizing pilot measures for improvement of the business environment and support social initiatives. Since youth, women and ethnic minorities as well as more vulnerable groups like members of poor households and persons with disabilities are included, this participative process contributes to the principle of Leave No One Behind. It is high on the agenda of the political partner, the Ministry of Economic Development, which signs responsible for Kyrgyz strategy for development of regions. Formation of agricultural clusters is an integral part of this strategy, to which GIZ contributes through matchmaking between producers, tourism MSME and service providers as well as between private and public sector.

Financed by the European Union and co-financed by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the GIZ project supports new income opportunities for rural households, strengthens an inclusive pro-poor economic development, and finally, contributes to alleviating poverty in rural areas of the country.



210 local self-governments and members of civil society, citizens are trained in local development



15 NGOs have received **17** grants for total of €4.2 Mio. for capacity building and rural development



400 producers grow their capacity in quality of services, environmentally friendly production, increasing of yields



31 tourism business initiatives throughout the region are supported

A Success Story: Sustainable Farming for Income Opportunities

Farmer Muratali Osorov from Kyzyl Ai village in the Jalal-Abad region is growing maize in his field for the third straight year. In 2020, he used new seeds and technologies with the support of GIZ and the TES Centre's Agricultural and Extension Training Service. "We sowed the "pioneer" seed 3,198. This variety is resistant to diseases," – says Muratali. – "It provides high yields and has a high caloric value, making it perfect fodder for livestock." The disease resistance of this variety, the ability to sow with pneumatic seeders, helped Muratali and other farmers from Kyzyl Ai save time and money. GIZ helped them obtain agricultural machinery and procure quality seeds, improve knowledge in pest management, as well as in the use of fertilizers and modern sowing methods.



"First of all, we received seeds and fertilizers on time. Also we had a new sowing machine, a new tractor with a cultivator, and a sprayer for pesticides," – Muratali recalls. TES Centre agronomists came every 10 days and checked up on the maize as well. They consulted farmers on pesticides and fertilizers. As a result, the harvest was bountiful, and the farmers are happy. "We gathered 4-5 tons more yield from every hectare this year. This is very good," – Muratali says with a sunny smile. He and other farmers plan to sow more than 400 hectares of land with corn by 2022.



In the Kyzyl Ai village, GIZ is supporting four groups of maize producers involving more than 90 people. In total, they will cultivate maize on 105 ha of land. This area has the capacity to become a leading producer of maize in the Jalal-Abad region.

Another example of successful farming is from Aral village in Nookan district. Here the young farmer Husan Sultanov is a member of the local group of onion producers. He leases machinery and seeds, and constantly improves his knowledge of modern technologies in growing agricultural crops. In 2020 he has achieved a record yield as well. "I used to get 47-50 tonnes a year per hectare," – recalls Husan. – "And this year I harvested 65 tonnes of onion per hectare. If a person tries hard, any work will become successful and fruitful."

Prospects for Youth

According to statistics, people between 14 and 28 years of age comprise 28% out of the total population of the Kyrgyz Republic. Economically active youth are an important human resource and play critical roles in development globally. At the same time, more than 70% of Kyrgyz youth live in rural areas where they face unemployment and few opportunities. Many are prepared to engage in society and participate in the decision-making processes that shape their lives, though few administrative bodies integrate youth in planning or solicit their opinions. There are currently 484 municipalities in the country; most still involve no local youth in joint activities or allocate funds for their promotion measures. All of these aspects have resulted in a high rate of youth migration to the capital city Bishkek and to other countries.



The Kyrgyz-German project "Prospects for Youth" supports its partners in improving policies and measures to strengthen the economic and social participation of young people and to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – SDGs 1 "No poverty", 4 "Quality Education", 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth", and 16 "Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions". GIZ is implementing the project on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in 20 municipalities in four regions – Chui, Issyk-Kul, Naryn and Talas. Its purpose is to strengthen the capacities of governmental and non-governmental institutions and to actively promote cooperation and exchange among them, the private sector, and local and national interest groups. Improved intersectoral cooperation will allow financing opportunities and a more efficient use of human resources. Support goes as well to the development of the long-term Youth Development Concept 2020-2030 together with young people.

On the local government level, the project encourages municipalities to participate in intensive exchanges with young people and to consider their interests and needs when making decisions. Digital communication is critical to this. We have helped integrate measures for youth promotion into 10 municipal development plans, so that more money is available for youth-related services.

To achieve long-term positive effects, emphasis is on capacity building among young people and developing professional specialists in the youth sector. As an example, we carried out an official training course for state and municipal employees involved with youth, something done in close cooperation with the State Agency for Youth Affairs, Physical Culture and Sports. 133 participants have completed this modular training. We also support youth NGOs in strengthening their organizations, managing projects (among other in local tourism) and cooperating with their various stakeholders.

Local municipalities supported and co-funded 122 projects from 44 youth NGOs to improve employment opportunities among young people and to develop labor-market related skills.



403 graduates of certified training courses for young leaders



16 municipalities have allocated resources for youth related activities



177 newly employed young people since 2017

A Success Story: Ambitious Youth Help Communities Develop

Omurbek Kurmanbekov is the chairman of the Youth Center in Karakol city. Several years ago, he completed the six-month "Dilgir" training course, which is implemented by GIZ. He subsequently won a grant to set up a welding and polymer shop. It now employs three people and offers six-seven seasonal jobs. Some 20 students from vocational schools undergo training at this workshop each summer about.



Omurbek has been the chairman of the "Issyk-Kul Youth Business Club" since 2019. Roughly 20 volunteers are actively involved with this public association. "I want to continue helping young women and men with employment," – says Omurbek. – "We organize trainings for them to learn to write project applications and implement them. Another grant we won from GIZ helped us establish a social sewing workshop. We have four women working there." At the end of March 2020, when demand for masks increased in Karakol due to the pandemic, the workshop produced nearly 1,000 masks and distributed half of them to disadvantaged families free of cost.

The "Issyk-Kul Youth Business Club" works closely with the local government. It signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Mayor's Office of Karakol and now holds numerous public events together with the city administration. Such cooperation is rare, and this success inspires Omurbek and his team. "We are happy that we have our own Youth Development Strategy in Karakol," – says Omurbek proudly. "Young activists elaborated this strategy in 2018. GIZ supported dialogue between city officials and young people and helped develop the document." It allocated additional finances for youth services after the local parliament adopted and approved the strategy.



More funds have been allocated each year: 300,000 KGS (approx. \$4,400) in 2017, 600,000 (approx. \$8,600) in 2018, and 878,000 (approx. \$11,500) in 2020.

Often, people in countries with limited resources are not fully aware of how important young people are to them or what to invest in them. This does not apply to Omurbek Kurmanbekov. After all, he and his team have managed to prove that young activists are a driving force in developing their society, region and country.

Promotion of Employment and Vocational Qualification

Effective employment significantly contributes to economic and social development, as well as to poverty reduction, by increasing economic productivity and strengthening social cohesion. Its importance is noted in both Kyrgyz national development strategies and concepts as well as in Sustainable Development Goal 8, which is meant to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.



According to the National Statistical Committee, at least one member in 22% of households lost work to the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall unemployment rate is estimated at 5.5%. To improve the prospects of those entering the job market, GIZ implements the Kyrgyz-German project “Promotion of Employment and Vocational Qualification” over the course of 2021–2023 on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The project builds on the activities of its predecessor and develop tools to promote productive employment and to increase the income of various groups, including men and women in difficult situations, youth, people with disabilities, and representatives of ethnic minorities. Together with our main partners – the Ministry of Labor and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Agency for Primary Vocational Education – we will elaborate series of targeted tools, policies, and analyses to assist those on the labour market and provide these to at least 30 employment services. Project support will also include digital solutions, innovative counseling for the unemployed, and training for in-demand job skills.

We will extend the social partnership model and career guidance methods for 9th grade students to various regions and schools. The model has been already tested successfully in eight pilot employment programmes in cooperation with 24 secondary schools. These activities help students make informed decisions about their career paths.

The involvement of the private sector in educational processes at the primary vocational education level is one of the most important conditions for ensuring the quality of education. Employers know what kind of personnel they need, use advanced technology in their work, and have the most modern techniques and equipment at their disposal. Education often falls behind developments in the private sector, so it is important to maintain the link between production and education. In this matter, we will support the Agency for Primary Vocational Education in introducing processes that will allow employers or their representatives to independently certify professional skills.

 **1,518** (740 female) graduates of vocational schools received certification of their skills

 **69** PwD graduates of short-term web development courses

 **650** students participated in the career guidance programme

 **1** labour Market Information System countrywide

 **22** accredited educational programmes

Professional Education in Central Asia – Fostering Systemic Approaches in the Food Processing Sector

Kyrgyzstan – like the other countries of Central Asia – has a very young population. The high proportion of young people holds great potential for the economic development, as companies in all sectors are desperately seeking qualified technical and managerial staff. At the same time, however, many youths and young adults are forced to migrate to Russia or elsewhere to earn a living for themselves and their families. Vocational training is the key to harnessing Kyrgyzstan’s human resources to its economic and social development.

However, this requires systemic reform oriented towards the requirements of the labour market. The outdated job profiles of the Soviet era have to be modernized, training content needs to be more practice-oriented, and companies must be involved in the training of the future skilled workers they will employ.

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the project “Vocational Education and Training in Central Asia (PECA)” supports the reform of vocational education and training in Kyrgyzstan and three other countries in the region, using the food processing industry as an example. Special attention is paid to labour market orientation and the introduction of international quality standards. The goal is a dual vocational and higher education system in which a significant part of the learning takes place in the company, i.e. directly at the workplace. In addition, the project is actively promoting the regional connectivity of the national vocational training systems in to enable a cross-border training and labour market.



In Kyrgyzstan, the project, in cooperation with the relevant ministries, educational institutions and employers, is creating important legal foundations for the needs-based training of skilled workers. We have developed a national methodology for defining modern occupational standards and concepts for introducing dual vocational and higher education. In addition, we advise various professional associations on the legal structure and technical implementation of in-company initial and continuing training.



At the Kara-Balta Technical and Economic Vocational School, we supported the introduction of “food technician” training; this includes developing training plans, establishing laboratories and training of teaching staff. The vocational school has become a national showcase in the field of dual vocational training. PECA follows a similar approach in higher education: we have introduced Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes in “Food Technology” at the Bishkek State Technical University

(KSTU) in accordance with the criteria of the European "Bologna" agreement. By the end of this year, we will add further study programmes in "Food Technology" and "Logistics" to KSTU, the Osh Technological University and the National Agricultural University in Bishkek.

 1 dual training "food technician" course

 75% of the graduates have either found a job suitable for their training or have started upgrading skills in their field of study

 52 teachers are trained on subjects of modern teaching approaches

 15 modern equipped food technology laboratories

 1 national methodology for the definition of professional standards

 Approx. 900 trainees/students are currently enrolled in PECA-supported training programmes

Trade Facilitation in Central Asia

Central Asia, with its young and educated population, natural resources, and strategic location, has enormous potential for trade. Despite this potential, the countries are barely integrated into the global economy. The transportation of goods regionally is associated with high costs since only land routes can be used. Excessive physical inspections and time-consuming border crossing procedures hinder further trade development.

On behalf of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ is implementing a project to improve trade facilitation measures in four countries of the region: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The beneficiaries of the project are trading companies. GIZ is rolling out the project in cooperation with the national ministries responsible for economic development and trade, with customs authorities and border control agencies, as well as with business associations. We are providing partners and beneficiaries with assistance in the form of technical expertise and training on how to make border crossings and transit faster and transparent.

We provide support to public-private dialogue at national and regional levels and are helping to identify barriers to trade and find common solutions.

Testing pilot measures at selected border crossing points will show that trade reforms can be implemented on the ground and are needed for Central Asian countries in order to utilize their existing potential.

 480 representatives from border agencies completed trainings on trade facilitation and risk management systems

 The 5 most relevant Kyrgyz border agencies for trade are part of the joint IT-system

 Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan agreed to create a regional platform of National Trade Facilitation bodies



Health



Promotion of Primary Healthcare in Kyrgyzstan

Over the last 30 years since independence the health system in Kyrgyzstan has experienced both successes and failures in their efforts to reform and to establish effective and efficient health care for all. By 2019 the Kyrgyz population still lacked adequate access to quality primary health care (PHC) services. The current strategy “Healthy person – Prosperous Country” (2019–2030) aims to strengthen citizens’ responsibility for their own health with the state creating an environment for health protection and promoting it.

The Kyrgyz–German project “Promotion of Primary Healthcare” has started in 2021 on behalf of Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It succeeds the project “Promotion of Perinatal Health” and is implemented jointly with the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic (MoH). The objective is to improve quality of health services at the primary care level in Chui and Osh regions, with a focus on mother and child health. It is in line with the National Health Strategy 2019–2030 and contributes to the achievement of SDG 3 “Good Health and Well-being”. Together with national experts we work to promote the principles of people oriented integrated care in selected (PHC) organizations. This will be achieved by

strengthening the management of them, promoting continued mentorship strategies and developing the competencies of health professionals. With the MoH, the project team work to develop standards and guidelines for integrated care of pregnant women, mothers and newborns. At a facility level we support quality improvement teams to sustain the multidisciplinary approach launched in the previous project. Developing the skills and mindsets of health professionals is crucial in effective implementation of the person-centred approach and ultimately improving the quality of services. We support the Ministry with the reform of the PHC system through examples of revised job descriptions for family doctors and nurses. These will be accompanied by intensive on-the-job trainings to take on their new tasks. Since the improvement of health services in mother-child health is highly relevant in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic GIZ will continue to support Family Medical Centres in infection prevention and control.

13 health care organizations (HCO), supported by the previous project on perinatal health, are now able to develop and monitor their Annual Quality Improvement Plans; 75 midwives, from secondary HCO of Chui, Naryn, Issyk-Kul and Osh, are skilled on management of Emergency Obstetric Care. National clinical protocol, updated according to WHO latest recommendations, enables midwives to manage physiological deliveries. Thanks to the project support cases of hospital-acquired infections in neonatal intensive care units in the five pilot regions have fallen from 7.6% to 5.8%. Training module on management of high-risk pregnancies is integrated into the curricula of continuous medical education. 50 job descriptions for clinical staff for future National Perinatal Center and the Recruitment & Selection Guide to hire health workers have been developed.

 1,202 midwives use Safe Delivery – mobile application

 75 midwives from secondary HCO trained on management of Emergency Obstetric Care

 13 HCO have approved Annual Quality Improvement Plan



A Success Story: A Digital Companion for Kyrgyz Midwives

“I learned about the Safe Delivery app during training in 2019, – says Gulbubu Bektursunova, a senior midwife with 25 years of work experience, at Kara-Buura Territorial Hospital in Talas region. – “I was immediately interested. It’s convenient because it has clinical sections on different topics with practical procedures, action cards and the medication required for each procedure. And it works offline!”

The app is a significant help to midwives. Depending on the territory, population, and remoteness of villages, there are some hospital branches, where midwives work without a doctor. Often these midwives do not have much experience with complications during pregnancy, as these branches only support normal deliveries. In the case of complications, a woman is referred to a territorial or regional hospital. With a smartphone, midwives can help mothers and newborns faster and more effectively. More than 1,200 midwives have been trained on how to use the application. For example, Gulbubu and her colleagues visit remote villages once a month and hold seminars. “We like to conduct training on the Safe Delivery app,” says Gulbubu. “All sections are available in Kyrgyz and Russian and adapted for our clinical protocols.”



This Smartphone app provides midwives with direct and instant access to evidence-based and up-to-date clinical guidelines on Basic Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care. The Safe Delivery App is already being used in more than 40 countries as a training tool for pre- and in-service training and as a pocket-sized reference for midwives working in even the most remote areas. It was developed by the Maternity Foundation, the University of Copenhagen and the University of Southern Denmark. GIZ and the Kyrgyz Ministry of Health worked together to adapt it for use in Kyrgyzstan in May 2019.

BACKUP Health in Kyrgyzstan

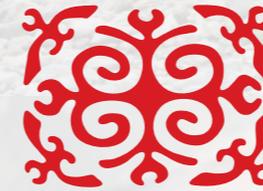
The global programme BACKUP Health supports better implementation of the programmes financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The project helps to ensure that Global Fund grants are used in an efficient manner, that they focus on the target groups and strengthen the health system.

From 2002 to 2020, BACKUP supported governmental and civil society partners in around 90 countries with over 600 measures. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), BACKUP has selected four focus countries with personnel in country: Cameroon, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi and Nigeria. Since 2013, the global programme has been co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The project supports cooperation partners primarily in three intervention areas: 1) Governance of Country Coordinating Mechanisms and their coordination in the health sector, 2) use of Global Fund grants to strengthen health systems, and 3) management capacities of Global Fund grant recipients. The services provided by

BACKUP Health range from short-term process-related and technical advice by seconded experts to projects with governmental and non-governmental organisations lasting between one and two years. Organisations from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have already applied for short-term or long-term support in three intervention areas and received it.

In 2019, 214 people in Kyrgyzstan have participated directly in procedures/ processes supported by BACKUP. During COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the project donated equipment and supplies for PCR tests to the National Reference Laboratory. For improvement of infection prevention and control in the entire Kyrgyz prison population (that consists of 11 prisons, 7,000 prisoners and 4,000 wards), 20 tons of hygiene articles and gloves was handed over. This support to the prisoners and prison guards was accompanied by an information campaign conducted by BACKUP Health and the NGO AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW) in the penitentiary system.



Environment and Natural Resources



Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Reduction through Community-based Management of Walnut Forests and Pastures

Kyrgyzstan is home to the world's largest naturally growing walnut-fruit forest, which covers some 56% of the country's total forest area. The walnut forest covering 45,000 ha. It surrounds Arstanbap village in the Jalal-Abad region and produces approx. 1,000-1,500 tons of walnuts each year. More than 400,000 people live in this area and generate most of their income through collecting and selling walnuts and wild fruits, though some also farm livestock. It is estimated that some 70% of the pastures and forests are being gradually degraded due to inappropriate land management.

The walnut forests and pastures in the country are state-owned. State forestry enterprises manage them at the local level. They lease out forest plots and, in some cases, only a few trees to local households in densely populated areas. The enterprises are working with the local population to instill sustainable and innovative approaches to land management.

GIZ implemented the Kyrgyz-German project "Biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction through community-based management of walnut forests and pastures" since 2018 on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) and in close collaboration with its national partner, the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry (SAEPF). The project overall purpose is to support of sustainable forest and integrated pasture management plans. From 2021 onwards, it particularly focuses on empowerment of women in decision-making processes and to bring digitization, institutionalization, and mainstreaming into action. It will contribute to smooth transition to green economic practices in the

country and to promote biodiversity conservation, increase rural incomes, and assist in efforts to adapt to climate change. The project has embraced the "Leave No One Behind" principle in its use inclusive approaches and supports implementing SDG 1 "No Poverty", SDG 2 "Zero Hunger", SDG 4 "Quality Education", SDG 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth", SDG 13 "Climate Action", and SDG 15 "Life on Land".

In the previous years GIZ introduced three innovative land use measures and assisted in the sustainable management of 7,770 ha of Jalal-Abad walnut forest and pastures; more than 1,621 land users were involved in these efforts. These innovative models have been incorporated into the national regulatory framework. We helped mainstream best practices across the country and provided deep support for policy dialogue. Thanks to project assistance the term "wild walnut kernels" is now included in international DDP-02 standards for walnuts under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), something that is likely to boost the export growth of Kyrgyz wild kernels.

 39 ha of fenced walnut and fruit plantations

 1,621 land users manage the forest sustainably

 3 innovative land use measures were introduced on 7,770 ha



A Success Story: Improved Well-being through Forest Management

Kyzyl-Unkur, a small village in Jalal-Abad region, is surrounded by unique walnut-fruit forests. Their total area is 520 km². People's primary sources of livelihood are livestock farming and crop production. This is true for almost all other regions of the country. The village, like many others, has witnessed a growth in cattle and other small livestock especially in recent years. Forest degradation has intensified due to regular and poorly controlled grazing, which destroys young shoots and seedlings. The population regularly cuts down trees for fuel and strips them of nuts completely. The forest has ceased regeneration and is rapidly aging. If this trend persists, forests will face the threat of complete extinction.

To prevent this scenario, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic launched a state programme for the development of walnut-fruit crops. With the support of international projects on biodiversity conservation, forest enterprises began to implement community-based forest management. Since 2007, fertile forest plots have been leased to farmers at an average of Kyrgyz Soms 1,000 (ca. USD 15) per hectare. Farmers have undertaken to care for their plots and promote forest restoration. In exchange for this, they harvest walnuts, wild fruits, mushrooms, medicinal plants, and hay for animal feed. Collecting and selling walnuts generates profits of up to USD 1,000 a year and sometimes more, since one hectare of forest can produce up to 500 kg of walnuts. Foresters regularly visit the leased sites and monitor their use.

Erkinbek Bakirov, one of the local farmers, expressed interest in the new approach and rented a forest plot of 5 hectares in the Ak-Bartym gorge in the Kok-Oi forest enterprise. Using agroforestry methods, he plants walnut seedlings between bushes and thus protects the seedlings from being eaten up or trampled by animals.

"So far, I have planted 450 apple, 300 pistachio and 200 pear trees on this plot," says Bakirov. "Thanks to the GIZ project, I was provided with





1,150 meters of barbed wire and metal to fence the area. We have closed the whole territory and thus protected the seedlings from animals. We used to harvest only 25 tons of hay for the forest enterprise per season. In 2017, we harvested 40 ton, while 2019 the yield amounted to 70 tons. Seeing our results, many villagers now also plan to rent forest plots on a long-term basis," Bakirov proudly said.

The project allocates the necessary materials for fencing, while farmers return one sixth of the value of materials, they receive every year. Notably the forest enterprise then spends the funds returned on materials for other farmers, so that they can also engage in the effective management of forest resources. These returns help to annually create new plots of up to 10 hectares.

Bakirov and other local people in the forest enterprise's territory have changed their attitudes towards forest resources and begun to invest in forest

restoration. GIZ helps them by organizing special trainings on the cultivation and proper care of trees, collection and harvesting of non-wood forest products, certification of walnuts according to the fair trade and organic production standards on a regular basis. Forest enterprise employees are moreover trained in developing comprehensive forest and pasture management plans as well as on tax issues. GIZ support covers work with local forest users through educating children and young people to advising political partners on legislative issues.



Sustainable and Climate Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia

Kyrgyzstan, with its total area of 19.9 million hectares, has slightly more than 9 million ha of pastures and hayfields, comprising 85% of all agricultural lands. Forests cover about 5.6% of the country. More than half the population lives in rural areas; pastures and forests are an important, and often the only source, of their income. At the same time, villagers often lack the capacity to apply strategies and approaches for sustainable land use. Resources are degrading in the short and medium-term as a result, and the land is losing its biodiversity. This, in turn, serves to aggravate poverty in rural areas.

The Kyrgyz government realizes the importance of environmental issues and the dangers, but often lack the capacities and resources to tackle here. Here GIZ supports through the regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia. The programme is implemented on behalf of BMZ and active in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is supporting implementation of SDG 15 "Life on Land", SDG 1 "No Poverty", SDG 2 "Zero Hunger", and SDG 13 "Climate Action".

Together with stakeholders, population and local administrations we have developed and introduced integrated approaches and locally adapted measures and methods for protecting forests and utilizing their resources sustainably. On the one hand, these measures are aimed to stop the deterioration and gradual disappearance of these resources, and on the other hand, to improve the livelihoods of people. Since natural resources cross borders, with their degradation in one territory impacting another, we have actively facilitated inter-sectoral policy dialogues for the promotion of cross-border cooperation and regional partnerships.

Together with strategic partners, we piloted forest sector reform at national and local levels (6 forest enterprisers) by testing new management approaches in Kyrgyzstan. Results of piloting serve as a basis for development of new concept for forestry development. Based on this experience and with our support, the World Bank has launched a project for the integrated management of forest ecosystems. We helped develop 27 amendments to four codes and five laws on land management; the administration has also committed supporting investments to ameliorate unproductive lands.

We used the experience gained from working on different levels in all five countries of the region to synthesize the "Integrated Land Use Management Approaches" strategy (ILUMA). The follow on project "Integrative and Climate-sensitive Land Use in Central Asia" programme (2021-2024) will focus on anchoring these approaches at the national and regional levels and contributing effectively to environmental protection, the conservation of biodiversity and efforts to adapt to climate change.



 123,805 people benefit from sustainable forest management

 10 Interactive TV programmes in Kyrgyz and Russian for children

 122 state and non-state partners improved their capacities in forest management

A Success Story: Planting Fruit Trees in Rocky Ground

From 2010 to 2018, Kanat Zhantaev worked as the director of the Balykchy forest enterprise, Issyk-Kul region, and thus has a unique understanding of the importance of increasing forested areas. The lands covered by the forest enterprise are considered arid and desert-sandy; there is no irrigation infrastructure, which means that access to water resources is very limited. Zhantaev says that he spent the first three months after his appointment considering whether or not he should leave. Prior to that, he had managed large territories filled by abundant spruce forests. "I was shocked at the beginning," recalls Zhantaev. But he stayed and for several years managed to transform the Balykchy forest enterprise into a model for others to follow. The forest enterprise was included in a cohort of six forest enterprises where, in accordance with a Kyrgyz Republic Government decree and with the support of various international organizations, forestry reform had been piloted for five years. GIZ actively supported the piloting and testing of innovative approaches to resource management, which included involving the local population in the forest enterprise's activities. The new methods were not immediately supported by the people, however, and forest enterprises staff had to expend significant efforts to convince them. After a while, local residents began to participate in the development and implementation of joint forest management plans.

One of the main priorities of the Balykchy forest enterprise was the planting of orchards and fast-growing trees plantations in arid unproductive soil. By renting out vacant forest areas to local people K. Zhantaev managed to attract large local and foreign investments – over USD 2 million and over USD 400 thousand, respectively. Entrepreneurs and tenants invested their labor and capital. "No such active planting took place around Issyk-Kul 7–8 years ago," recalls Zhantaev, "while today we are witnessing a boom. People have realized that the cultivation of orchards today is a way out of the crisis."



In 2019, the forest enterprise grows orchards on over 500 hectares of unproductive arid areas. The orchards belong to 250–300 households that hire people to water and care for trees, with the number of workers increasing during the harvest season. On average, one family earns from KGS 500 to 1,500 (USD 7–22) per day. This is a very good addition to the family budget in a country where almost one sixth of the population (of which almost 70% are rural residents) lives below the poverty line.

High quality orchards require high-grade climate-resistant seedlings. The Balykchy forest enterprise is engaged in the growing and cultivation of such varieties of apple and other fruit species and provides them to the population. At the same time, it creates conditions to establish fast-growing industrial plantations of poplar and other species to provide local residents with raw wood, fuelwood and building wood. This measure helps to prevent the uncontrolled felling of trees for various economic needs.

Zhantaev says proudly that the Balykchy forest enterprise was able to establish a good model of joint management of forest areas and to find a solution to the social problem of unemployment through new income-generating activities. At the same time, they were able to improve the state of the environment, and rocky wastelands have been transformed into green oases. Today, with the support of GIZ, more than 50 hectares of fast-growing plantations have been planted.

Each actor in the joint management of forest resources plays an important role. The state, having no financial resources, creates, with the support of GIZ, the legal framework and conditions necessary for such initiatives and the implementation of innovative methods in forest management. Forest enterprises were able to engage farmers in cooperation and form exemplary practices. GIZ trains forest enterprises staff while also providing technical means and equipment. As a result, according to Zhantaev, it is possible to re-orient forest enterprises across the country towards self-financing in the future, since the framework for a sustainable economic, organizational model has already been tested.



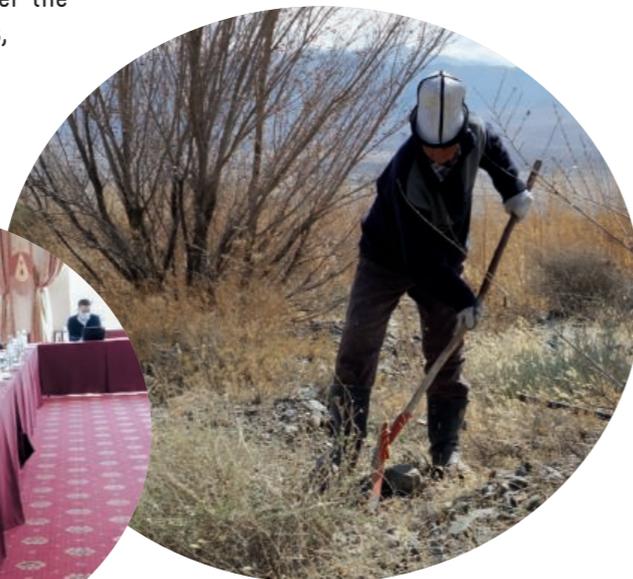
Pilot-based Afforestation and Reforestation of Degraded Forest Areas in the Border Area between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

As part of the “Bonn Challenge”, the countries of Central Asia pledged to protect and restore forests: Kazakhstan – 1,500,000 ha, Kyrgyzstan – 320,000 ha, Tajikistan – 66,000 ha, and Uzbekistan – 500,000 ha. The “Bonn Challenge” has been initiated to respond to the urgent issue of land degradation worldwide.

The project, “Pilot-based Afforestation and Reforestation of Degraded Forest Areas in the Border Area between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan,” is meant to develop an economically viable concept of afforestation and forest landscape restoration that is tailored to local conditions in two countries. In its initial stages, the project will analyse satellite images of forest cover change during the last 40 to 70 years. It will assist in determining those areas in the border regions of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan in which forest cover has changed due to degradation and/or deforestation.

In a further step, and under the leadership of national partners, we will select representative pilot sites for afforestation and reforestation, considering the local conditions and national policies of both countries as well as the concerns of local stakeholders involved in the process.

It is expected that the methodology developed and tested during the project – a system for identifying potential areas for reforestation – will help the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan fulfill their obligations under the international “Bonn Challenge” initiative.



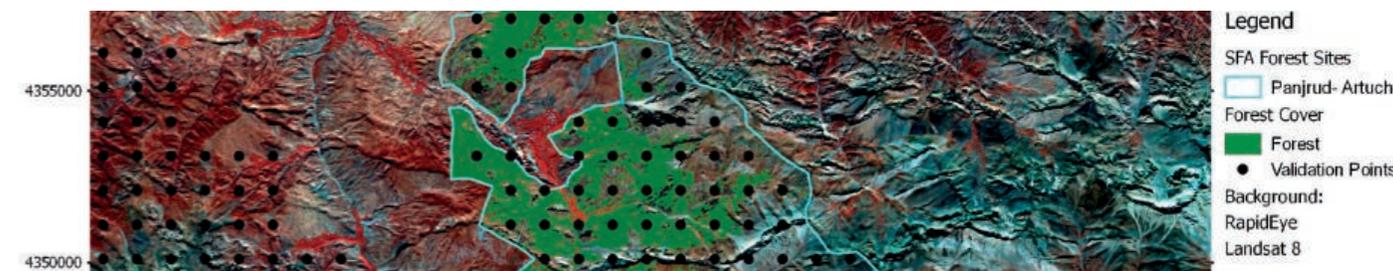
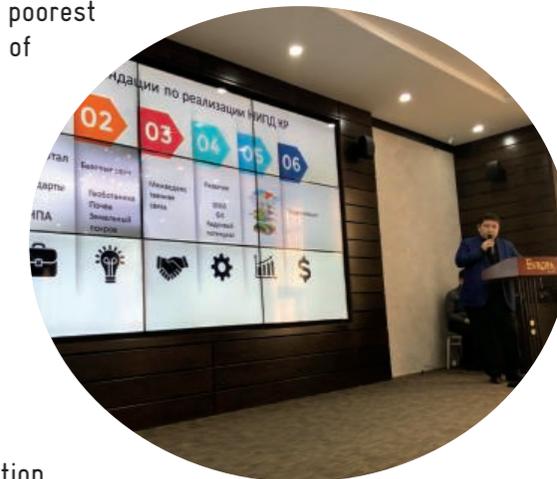
Technology Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Rural Areas of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

Climate change is severely impacting Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, two of the poorest countries in Central Asia. Accelerating landscape degradation and the loss of woodlands and forests is intensifying the rural population’s vulnerability to climate change. Evidence based planning for rural areas will mitigate natural hazards and help people to take appropriate measures in times of changing climate. State administrations want to plan effective adaptation measures for people living in mountainous regions, but the existing baseline data is insufficient. The administrations lack climate-related geographical information and modern technologies to process and manage geodata and to pass it on to the relevant authorities.

In 2019 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) assigned GIZ to strengthen technological capacities in the partner institutions and to improve planning for climate change adaptation.

We are working to establish national geodata infrastructures as part of the project, Technology Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Rural Areas of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to ensure geographical information can be gathered, evaluated and used. Authorities need access to abundant, high quality and up to date cartographic information for effective planning. This information already exists in different governmental institutions and will be made available to all relevant stakeholders through connecting web-based platform and via new digital thematic maps based on satellite images or spatial modelling that will be created. We assist to incorporate the improved baseline data when drawing up adaptation plans and to implement these plans in the municipalities.

The project will contribute to the achievement of SDG 13 “Climate Action” and SDG 15 “Life on Land”.



Green Central Asia: Cross-border Dialogue on Climate, Environment and Security Issues in Central Asia and Afghanistan

Germany has been actively engaged in supporting regional cooperation in Central Asia for over a decade with the so called Berlin Process which focuses on transboundary water management among the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan). Enhancing stability in the region and mitigating the impact of climate change on glaciers and natural resources such as water, land and soil will improve access to food security and water availability and create healthier living conditions.



The German Foreign Office launched a “Green Central Asia” initiative with a ministerial conference in Berlin in January 2020. Meant to address the environment, climate change, and water resilience, the initiative was part of Germany’s commitment to engagement on climate change and security within the UN and unfolded within the framework of the EU-Central Asia Strategy of June 2019. Central Asian foreign ministers responded positively to “Green Central Asia”, expressing their readiness for collaboration and dialogue on climate, environment, and security, especially in relation to conflict prevention and enhancing transboundary cooperation. The initiative also broadened the geography of regional cooperation by including Afghanistan.

The aim of “Green Central Asia” is to improve access to information and risk analysis to enable participating countries to more accurately assess the impact of climate change and take preventive measures. At the same time, its dialogues and workshops are meant to increase the ability of decision-makers to adequately address security hazards at national and regional levels that are a result of climate change.

A well-established and science-based regional political dialogue could strengthen relationships between countries, especially if it addressed environmental and climate-related security risks and corresponding capacity building. Renowned institutions such as the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the Helmholtz Centre Potsdam-German Research Centre for Geosciences, the Martin Luther University Halle Wittenberg and the German-Kazakh University, will provide scientific support to the initiative.

“Green Central Asia” will furthermore cooperate with international organisations active in climate and water diplomacy. Its main international cooperation partners for the political dialogue will be the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the European Union, the ‘Blue Peace’ Initiative of the Swiss Foreign Ministry, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the Central Asia Regional Environment Centre. The Initiative will develop a joint action plan in close cooperation with the six partner counties, which will serve as a road map for joint actions – including with international partners – for the years 2021 to 2024. The initiative will complement its political dialogue by working with the media to raise awareness on issues of the environment, climate and water resilience through social and other media.



Promotion of the Rule of Law



Promotion of the Rule of Law in Central Asia

A thriving economy, with a system of government based on the rule of law and full protection of human rights, requires legal certainty and confidence in the judicial system. Merely adopting laws, however, is insufficient, even if their provisions correspond to international best practices and European Union standards. Laws must be comprehensible to the public, properly applied by legal professionals and enforced efficiently. Hence, the regional programme on promotion of the rule of law supports Central Asian governments in reforming their legal and judicial sectors. In Kyrgyzstan, the project offers advisory support to the government

on legal reform with a focus on administrative law. In addition, it provides training to judges, lawyers and civil servants to improve the application of administrative, civil and commercial law and to support the publication of specialized literature and disseminate court decisions. Moreover, programme experts are cultivating legal networks within Central Asia, as well as within Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States.

An integral part of the regional programme in Kyrgyzstan is “The Rule of Law Programme in the Kyrgyz Republic – 2nd Phase”, which the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development co-finance. Its overall objective is to improve the administration of the justice system and promote the rule of law; it is also meant to strengthen the capacity of executive bodies and citizens to assert their rights by modernizing the legislative process and improving the work of the judiciary and the prosecutorial authorities. GIZ is implementing

the programme with the support of a consortium of

organizations from EU member states. Besides providing expert support in several legal fields, including training and career development and the promotion of legal professions, it also features a strong IT component, supporting the development of citizen-oriented and human rights-based government services in drafting laws, managing court proceedings and prosecutions, and strengthening free legal aid structures in the country.



571 judges and prosecutors trained on handling cases involving corruption crimes



240 trainings for attorneys on legal services for victims of gender crimes



1 digital platform for public discussion of draft legal acts



10 published yearbooks and journals on key legal topics with contributions from experts from all over Central Asia



3 laws on administrative procedure and administrative process in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan

A Success Story: Female Attorneys Protect Victims of Gender Crimes in Kyrgyzstan

According to a demographic and health survey conducted by the National Statistical Committee in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, one in four women aged 15–49 years has experienced physical abuse at least once after the age of 15. For 4% of them it was sexual abuse by their current or ex-husband (partner), for 14% – emotional. In many cases, women do not seek the help of attorneys, but even if they do, offenders often escape punishment due to the incompetence of defense counsel. The topic of protecting victims and women victims of violence is an acute issue in the country today.



Zarina Batyrkulova works as an attorney in Bishkek. She has extensive professional experience and is now protecting women who have suffered violence. Together with 14 attendees from all regions of the country, she participated in training to enhance the skills of attorneys in giving effective legal assistance to victims of gender-based violence. It was conducted by GIZ jointly with the NGO “Kyrgyz Association of Women Judges” in 2019. More than half the participants primarily defended the interests of those accused of various crimes. The seminar helped them learn more about the specifics of interaction with victims and to better understand the actions of attorneys at the pre-trial stage and during trials. Most had not been aware, for example, that victims of gender-based violence needed to be treated with greater sensitivity and understanding. Many noted that the training, and the knowledge it provided, would allow them to competently protect the rights and interests of victims.

Zarina herself says that she learned a lot about interviewing victims and the importance of taking into account their psychological condition. This knowledge helps her a lot in practice.

She found the training so helpful that she now acts as a trainer, imparting what she learned to others.

“I think that I also make my contribution. – Zarina says proudly. – After such learning seminars, our attorneys and lawyers consider aspects of gender much more attentively.” She really hopes that her efforts and those of other qualified lawyers will help eliminate gender violence in Kyrgyzstan.





Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

Sustainable development, poverty reduction and climate policy are inextricably linked in the 2030 Agenda. The Agenda, which was adopted by all United Nations member states in September 2015, calls for nothing less than the transformation of our world. The aim is to reconcile global economic progress with social justice and the conservation of natural resources. It includes ensuring that no one will be left behind. That is why the 2030 Agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals focus on the weakest and most vulnerable members of society. Developing countries, emerging economies and industrialised nations must all do their part to ensure the success of the Agenda.

For GIZ, the 2030 Agenda is the overarching framework that guides our work, which it implements in close cooperation with partners and commissioning parties. The 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals are important benchmarks for GIZ. To ensure that they are implemented in our daily work, we have defined five principles drawn from this framework:

				
Shared responsibility The Agenda is applicable to all countries	Integrated approaches The 17 goals are indivisible and integrate	Leave no one behind The focus is on disadvantaged people	Accountability All initiatives must be transparent and the results must be verifiable	Universality The 2030 Agenda calls for a new understanding of cooperation

GIZ Kyrgyzstan supports the Kyrgyz Government in achieving respective SDGs and contributes through implementation of various measures.

Leave No One Behind

Development cooperation needs to strengthen the rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities. This is a huge serious responsibility. Providing equal rights for disabled persons helps a to reduce poverty by ensuring this group is not excluded from development.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, there are 186,000 people with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan. In 2019, the country ratified the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and took steps to meet this important commitment. The convention is meant to ensure the participation of people with special needs in the social, economic, political, and cultural spheres and to create the conditions for their equal participation in public life. This will require a joint effort on the part of the state, the private sector, and civil society.



GIZ supports efforts of Kyrgyz partners to promote inclusiveness and the fundamental principle of “Leave no one behind”. For example, through the project “Promotion of Employment and Vocational Qualification” an inclusive, short-term web-development course from its elaboration until successful piloting in six regions. GIZ technically equipped the premises of partner universities to make the course accessible for students by constructing ramps, outfitting lavatories, providing furniture, etc. Besides infrastructural improvement, our organisation assisted the Kyrgyz Software and Services Developers Association (KSSDA) in the development of the curricula. The students and teachers received necessary study materials and valuable books on programming languages. 14 teachers from all regions of Kyrgyzstan (among them 7 women) participated in the training on teaching CSS, HTML, JavaScript, Moodle, and soft skills in IT. Additionally, GIZ helped provide mentorship to graduates to improve their interview skills and CVs and to present themselves better. And also worked to make them aware of freelance work opportunities and to develop such soft skills as communication and team-work, which are crucial for web-developers.

The course was included in the list of state-funded short-term courses that public employment services provide to those out of work. Course graduates have a good chance to find a job. According to the KSSDA the IT-market has an annual demand for 500 specialists, whereas the supply is just 100. 69 participants of the first course in 2020 successfully completed their studies. Some of these started working, including Danil Kovtun, a 20-year-old who has limited mobility due to health conditions. “When I was selected to take the course on web design, I was glad,” recalls Danil. “It was not only an opportunity to learn something new in my scope of interest, but also to gain skills enabling me to work and benefit society!” He has already completed his first task: web design for the Agency for the Promotion and Protection of Investments. He recalls that when he found out about the approval of his candidacy, he was surprised and at first could not believe it. After the surprise came the realization of the first step. A step towards the goal he had set for himself.



Gender Equality: Supporting Women Empowerment

GIZ promotes gender equality in Kyrgyzstan and with its various measures, helps to improve the social and economic situation of women in rural areas, enhancing their skills and creating income opportunities. For instance, we assisted in establishing improved greenhouses that produce vegetable seedlings in the Jalal-Abad region.

The women operating these greenhouses are trained in technical and business issues. In addition, we supported creation of a Logistical Centre in 2020 that employs women to sort vegetables. Because of experts consultations female entrepreneurs in the agro-tourism sector improved the quality of services provided to tourists, developed new products and presented them on digital platforms. For Food Safety, we supported the municipal bakery “Bishkek Pekarnya” as a way to implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, training young food safety experts and the bakery’s mostly female staff. Because of our support, about 170 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises increased their income by 37% in 2020 on average: 36 of them are managed by women.



GIZ furthermore helped train 110 women last year in sewing fabric shopping bags, which the largest market chain in Kyrgyzstan is selling with a “No Plastic” slogan. This initiative brings together business and NGOs that are working on female entrepreneurship.

The NGO is working on training of woman and business is subsidizing sales and advertisement costs. The idea behind this initiative is to promote change of minds regarding plastic bag consumption and to help women from rural areas in income generation. We supported the NGO in this non-commercial project since any revenue will support females and ecological initiatives.

To improve employment opportunities, GIZ supports offers by local youth NGOs that focus on the development of skills for young people, including women, that are relevant to the labour market. We back employment projects with financial assistance, advice, and training. Priority areas are youth services, career guidance, tourism, environment, information and communication technologies, architecture/construction related services, food processing/catering, and textiles.

In 2020, we organized tailored online workshops on gender and female entrepreneurship for representatives of youth NGOs. 65 participants learned about the various gender stereotypes present in the regions of the country and talked with young women who shared local initiatives. After mentoring and advisory sessions, participants submitted 22 project proposals, with nine projects ultimately being selected. The projects range from bakeries, souvenir production, sewing workshops, and photography/videography studios to event organizing and catering services. For instance, we supported the project ideas and social and business services of the Youth Volunteer Organization “Leadership”.

Originating in Karakol city in the Issyk-Kul region, it is run by a team of four young women. This NGO has been organizing youth initiatives since 2005 and inspiring young people to take an active part in shaping their societies.

Innovation and Digitalization: New Digital Solutions for Sustainable Development

Digital change is altering the way individuals, societies and nations interact worldwide and playing an increasingly important role in cooperation on development. Digitalization is a cross-cutting issue and will contribute to the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Among other things, digital technologies support improved social and political participation and help to open markets and make knowledge accessible.

GIZ support partners in the digitalization process, particularly as it relates to training young people and professional specialists in the youth sector. We backed an officially recognized course, launched in 2020, to train state and municipal employees working with youth. It combines elements of e-learning and traditional training. Participants study in the classroom and online via the www.e-jashtar.kg platform, which presents some of the best interactive methods of education in the Kyrgyz and Russian languages.

E-learning enables specialists to control the pace, time and location of their own training. They can use a computer, tablet or smartphone for this purpose. The website has user-friendly navigation and an adaptive interface for individuals who are visually impaired. This 6-month course does not require the support of a trainer. New technologies allow participants to learn the material on their own, though they also can ask questions at webinars and in meetings with trainers. Those who successfully complete the training will receive a state certificate from the State Agency for Youth Affairs, Physical Culture and Sports and the State Personnel Service of the Kyrgyz Republic. As of today, 135 employees of state and municipal institutions have completed this modular training. After successfully piloting the platform, the State Agency plans to launch this blended learning course nationwide in 2021.

Another example is related to the employment sector. GIZ supported the development of web portal www.zanyatost.kg, which was created to make jobs more accessible to job-seekers all over the country. Employers can post their openings on the site, while those looking for work can apply for jobs and get information about employment services, short-term vocational courses, and the job market in general. The web-portal is optimized for the visually impaired.

Additionally, our organization helped elaboration of a learning platform dedicated to building up the human capacities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and its public employment services. Support was provided to the development of pilot courses to improve employment



services and consulting as well as technical instruction for the public relations specialists. This was in addition to basic computer literacy classes meant to improve the skills of partner staff across the country. These lessons are currently available on the learning platform. Several others are in development. The courses are self-paced, allowing students to participate on their own schedules. Thus, they function as a quality assurance tool to provide high level services all over the country, both in the cities and rural areas.

Localization of the SDGs of the Kyrgyz Republic



Kyrgyzstan presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the status of implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in 2020 at the High-Level Political Forum in New York. Government prepared the VNR as part of a consultative process involving multiple stakeholders.

It reflected challenges, lessons learned, best practices as well as progress towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the next steps for realizing them. It prioritized accelerating localization of SDGs as part of its commitment to "leave no one behind" and to reinforce a robust monitoring system at the regional level. This system is designed to develop policies based on actual results via the creation of a Regional Governance Index in line with the nationally defined priorities of Agenda 2030 and the 2040 National Development Strategy. GIZ is supporting the "Localization of the SDGs of the Kyrgyz Republic",

a Kyrgyz-German project, in cooperation with the Kyrgyz Ministry of Economy and on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). This support helps accelerate efforts to realize SDGs and facilitate the process of evidence-based decision-making by developing integrated monitoring mechanisms. This is essential for transparent and accountable governance and for raising awareness of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs among local governments and citizens. The project will ensure a well-developed local monitoring and evaluation system that is integrated into local institutional processes. This will help in assessing and strengthening good governance practices oriented towards SDGs nationwide. Projects end goal is to provide each region with a tool that is methodologically well prepared and contextually adapted to SDG and national priorities.





GIZ Response to Coronavirus in Kyrgyzstan: Economic and Social Impact

COVID-19 reached Kyrgyzstan according to official announcement in March 2020. The country faced a very difficult situation with the pandemic in the summer as the COVID-19 wave caused extended surges in coronavirus infections and deaths. The total number of confirmed coronavirus cases reached 83,000 in January 2021 and caused by then 1,412 fatalities.

GIZ Kyrgyzstan worked to support its partners in developing and introducing pandemic response systems from an early stage onwards. These included effective countermeasures and strengthening the capacity of health care infrastructure. GIZ complemented immediate response and assistance with measures to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on social and economic impacts.



In terms of rapid assistance, GIZ organized for example, transportation and meals for Osh medical staff and supported Osh Medical Headquarters in the coordination of activities and development of information materials. Our experts helped set up two mobile brigades with two to three trainers from the Kyrgyz State Medical Institute on Retraining and Continuous Education; the brigades organized 70 online and onsite COVID-19 training sessions for medical workers in the south. We provisioned targeted groups with protective equipment, laboratory supplies, materials, and various hygienic products and items, materials. The targeted groups included Osh health care organizations, laboratory staff in the Bishkek and Chui regions, the Kyrgyz state penitentiary system, the Office of Prosecutor General, the Bar Association and the Ombudsperson, as well traders, truck drivers, and freight forwarders. 400 families from vulnerable groups in Naryn region received food and other essentials. On behalf of German Government the Ministry of Health (MoH) was provided with 30 oxygen therapy devices. An onsite mission involving 5 international experts of the German Epidemic Preparedness Team (SEEG) brought 150,000 PCR test-kits and conducted trainings on laboratory diagnostics and the protection of laboratory personnel.

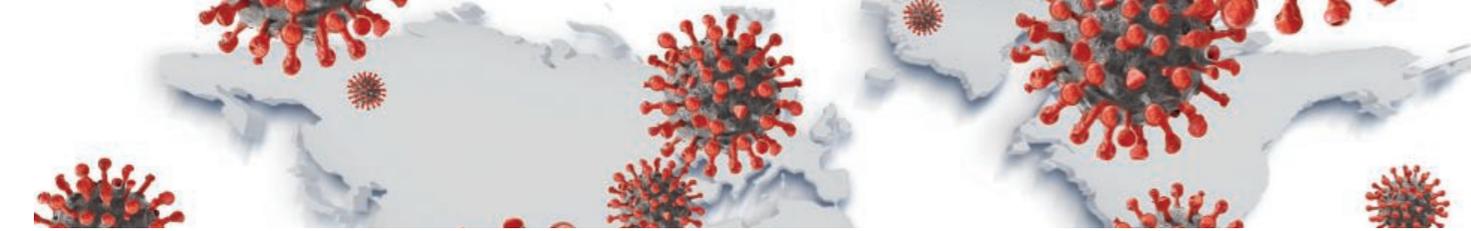


The capacity of medical workers and laboratory staff countrywide during the pandemic was critical and GIZ supported them through intensive trainings and consultations. Together with World Health Organization (WHO) Country Office in Kyrgyzstan different informational materials and videos in the Russian and Kyrgyz languages for dissemination among health care workers



GIZ Response to Coronavirus: Economic and Social Impact





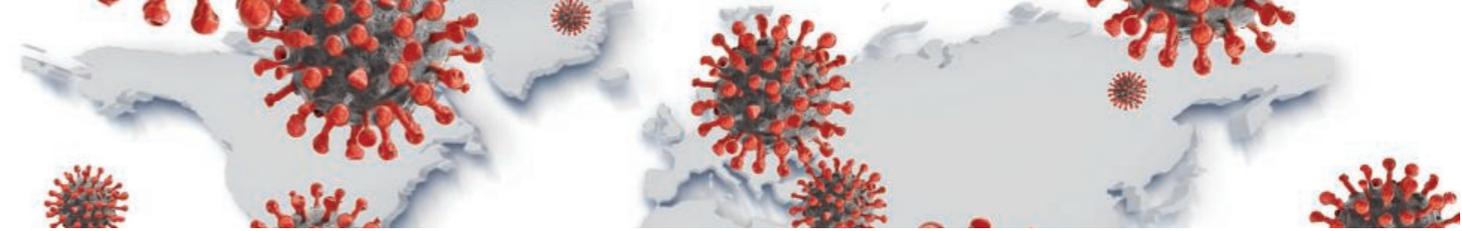
were produced. The team of experts assisted in developing and installing a unified online database for COVID-19 cases in 102 hospitals and 64 Family Medicine Centers (FMC), and to train 35 experts in the use of this technology. We supported Osh FMC and its 11 branches in strengthening their Infection Prevention and Infection Control system; it means in particular in development and assessment of their Action Plan, training for staff members (180), and assisted in regular monitoring and mentoring.

In the field of maternal and child healthcare, GIZ assisted MoH Working Groups in adopting WHO standards and algorithms for the management of pregnant women and newborns with COVID-19.

The Maternity House #2 in Bishkek developed internal algorithms for triage and pregnancy management and to aid in deliveries and Caesarian sections involving suspected or confirmed coronavirus infections. GIZ additionally helped adapt and translate a new COVID-19 module in the Kyrgyz and Russian languages for a Safe Delivery mobile application (developed by Maternity Foundation) that is used by more than 1,000 midwives countrywide.

As a contribution to the Ministry of Education and Science's "Anti-Crisis Plan" we supported to develop e-learning platforms and e-learning courses for use in higher education as well as in technical and vocational training programmes. Teachers from pilot schools produced video-lessons for professional education in Kyrgyz and Russian; the Ministry of Education and Science has approved these for further distribution. By May, 2,264 students in 24 schools in 8 cities had completed the online lessons. In addition, the Working Group of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development developed an Employment Promotion Programme for 2021-2025, which also considers measures to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19.

Our contribution to improving the social-economic situation encompassed a variety of measures. For instance, GIZ provided emergency assistance to 412 farmers with the help of NGOs and their local field advisors, which ensured early delivery of inputs required for work in Spring. We helped 1,285 fruit and vegetable farmers gain to the seeds, mineral fertilizers, biopreparations, and other vital means of production. In addition, 54 agriculture producers from Jalal-Abad region received fertilizers to recover from frost damage that affected early vegetable crops. 200 small and



medium-sized tourism enterprises in Jalal-Abad adapted improved products and marketing to recover from the crisis. Moreover, we strengthened income and employment possibilities in selected value chains (beef, early vegetables, plum, and sustainable tourism) with a special emphasis on green economic principles. GIZ assisted to develop and introduce a digital tracing and marketing system for cattle Issyk-Kul. 50 members of the HoReCa association ensured safety standards.



Together with our partners we conducted virtual round table discussions with civil society to help decrease incidents of gender and domestic violence the quarantine and submitted policy recommendations on immediate measures to decrease such incidents. We helped to analyze the capacity of shelters and asked donors and state agencies to work with hotels, resorts, and dormitories to support shelters in the state of emergency.

Our organization provided numerous measures to support partners in digitalization and communication, including an online platform for the exchange of "pre-arrival information on cargo" between the Ministry of Transport, the State Inspector on Veterinary Security, the Phytosanitary Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Sanitary Department of the Ministry of Health. The developed mobile application on obstacles related to the transportation of goods during the pandemic was useful for transport and logistic companies, traders, truck drivers and the various actors involved in foreign trade in Central Asia. In addition, GIZ provided the Department of Forest Ecosystem Development at the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry with 11 sets of communication equipment and trained its staff in usage of digital tools to improve communications between territorial divisions of the Department and forest enterprises.

As the pandemic and its consequences are far from being over, GIZ Kyrgyzstan will continue to provide assistance in line with its commissioners and projects and in coordination with development partners. Only joint efforts to alleviate the burden of this historic global threat will bring to the tangible results and help people and the country to overcome economic and social challenges, including health situation, and to improve living conditions.







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