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Fostering Development in the Rural Jalal-Abad Region

Context

Jalal-Abad is the fourth largest province by territory and the second largest by population in Kyrgyzstan. 26,9% of its residents are poor, while more than 78% live in rural areas. Poverty is the result of high underemployment and lack of income opportunities. Rural households are more vulnerable as they live from limited incomes from remittances, crop production, livestock keeping, and small entrepreneurship.

Due to low productivity and small land share, agriculture contributes little to the economic well-being. Few farmers are integrated into national and international supply chains as they do not have access to modern technologies and investment, and they lack efficiency in production and processing.

Nevertheless, there is a way for the region to thrive through employing its agricultural and tourism capacities. Adapting modern climate and eco-friendly practices to produce higher volumes of quality food and animal feed can pave the way to additional markets. Acquiring certification by international standards can open access to international markets of premium organic products.

Furthermore, the region's cultural heritage, mountainous landscape, and natural reserves with endemic flora and fauna create many opportunities for developing adventure and green tourism. Tourism-favouring policies, such as visa-free regime for many countries, provide good conditions for exploring this potential.

Our objective

In Jalal Abad Region, the population has improved income opportunities, particularly in agriculture and tourism. Local

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Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Programme region	Kyrgyzstan, Jalal-Abad region
Main partners	Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic
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governments have the capacity to foster business enabling environment and support to vulnerable groups.

Our measures

The Integrated Rural Development Programme is co-financed by the European Union and aims at contributing to national strategies in fostering inclusive economic development of rural areas and economic clusters. It builds on and upscales successfully implemented measures taken in the Jalal-Abad region by other GIZ projects.

We support local producers of onions, bio cotton, maize, wheat, and barley and local tourism service providers in integrating into national and international supply chains. They form producer groups and/or cooperatives and unite in local tourism networks. Ongoing consultation and training within these groups help them to increase knowledge on managing and expanding production, processing, services, and marketing. They exchange logistic and technical services inside the groups and share costs when obtaining external services. The membership also provides the farmers with easy access to modern agricultural technologies and revolving funds, while tourism benefits from joint marketing via websites. Thanks to the bundling of products they all become more competitive in national and international markets.



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

More international tourists are visiting Jalal-Abad nature reservoirs, such as "Sary Chelek Biosphere Reserve".

Young farmer Husan Sultanov from Aral village in Nookan district achieved a good yield of onion.

Photos: © GIZ / Alinur Niyazov, Maxime Fossat, Programme archive

We provide local producers and tourism service providers with training and coaching, study tours, and investment in modern technologies or small infrastructure that improves their services. Matchmaking between farmer respectively tourism groups and service providers relevant for them as well as with the public sector enhances the overall competitiveness and innovativeness of the sectors in the region.

Our next support contributes to the strengthening of inclusive local economic development planning. Representatives of the business sector, the civil society and of local self-governments identify needs, work out solutions and implement prioritised measures. They anchor this public-private dialogue as a planning process within a permanent committee on the municipal level. Youth, women, and ethnic minorities as well as more vulnerable groups like members of poor households and persons with disabilities participate in these processes.

We work together with the national and international civil society and non-governmental organisations. The selected NGOs receive grant agreements based on Calls for Proposals, followed by an expert evaluation and finalised by the voting of a high-level evaluation committee. To ensure sustainability, beneficiaries and partners make own financial and technical contribution. Partner NGOs also receive support in improving their capacities.

Our results to date

As a result of Calls for Proposals, 16 NGOs received financial support of total 4.7 Mio Euro for implementation of 23 activity packages. Through trainings and consulting in all matters concerning the work packages, partner NGOs are enabled to implement projects for other organisations on a higher level.

1,103 local farmers have become active members of 41 producer groups in six districts of the Jalal-Abad region. They learn about modern and innovate methods of crop cultivation and harvesting practices, and have access to inputs and technologies from eight machinery service providers and eight revolving funds supported by the IRDP. Additionally, they receive on-site and online consultations from agronomists on various topics. All these help

farmers to increase yields and improve income for their families. For instance, young farmer Husan Sultanov from Aral village in Nookan district joined the local onion producer group end of 2019. He participated in multiple trainings and workshops on modern cultivation techniques. In 2020, he first leased machinery and purchased seeds through revolving fund mechanism. As a result, Husan achieved his record yield by the end of 2020 agricultural season. “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”.

An umbrella destination management organisation “Destination Jalal-Abad” unites and strengthens more than 20 tourism service providers across the region. It has presented 15 expansive tour products tailored to the interests of foreign and national tourists. For instance, one might find all-inclusive trekking, horse trek, and cultural tours across the region following the link on the website of the organisation www.jalal-abad.com.

Two NGOs promote 25 business projects in tourism, including launching coffee shops, improving hygiene conditions in guesthouses, souvenir and artisan shops. Moreover, three community-based tourism centres (CBTs) started functioning in Sary-Chelek, Kazarman, and Toktogul. Two tourism information centres opened in Sary-Chelek and Jalal-Abad city. 40 tourism signboards across the region have been established in 2019 and now direct visitors to sights and attractions. The tourism service providers increase their knowledge through participation in ongoing trainings on green tourism practices, digital marketing, and efficient management.

In 41 municipalities, self-governments jointly with the local population are elaborating inclusive economic development plans. Using a participatory approach allows them to tackle economic and social issues for improving the population’s well-being. Working groups have been established, their members and representatives of the self-governments have gained knowledge about their tasks and principles of inclusive economic development planning. Ongoing trainings for implementation of prioritised measures will further enhance their capacities.

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	Registered offices Bonn and Eschborn, Germany	Text	Kaethe Brakhan, Saltanat Zhumakalyi kyzy
	Integrated Rural Development Programme 105, Isanova Str. 720001 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan Phone +996 312 90 65 43 irdp-kg@giz.de www.giz.de, www.irdp.kg	GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.	
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