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Swiss Cooperation Office
South Caucasus

Stimulating Markets for Farmers in the Districts of Barda, Tartar and Agdam (Project SMART Farmers)



Project title

Stimulating Markets for Farmers in the Districts of Barda, Tartar and Agdam (Project SMART Farmers)

General information

Region: Barda, Tartar and Agdam districts (Azerbaijan)
Duration: November 2010-November 2013
Budget: CHF 1'890'000

Project partners

- Implementing partner: Oxfam Great Britain
- Institutional partner: Ministry of Agriculture of Azerbaijan.

Project objectives

To reduce poverty through sustainable income and employment opportunities for women and men smallholders in the horticulture sector as well as for IDPs in the districts of Barda, Agdam and Tartar. The project specifically aims to:

- a) Increase access to quality vegetable seeds, information and advice for women and men smallholders;
- b) Achieve growth in strawberry market that benefit women, IDPs and other smallholder producers.

Background

Barda, Tartar and Agdam districts are situated in the central part of Azerbaijan, where the poverty level is very high. However, with the available land and labor force, the region has a potential for agricultural growth. The potential is especially strong in vegetable growing. A total of 416,000 people live in the mentioned districts which are almost totally rural in character. Agriculture is the main economic activity, but there are largely small-scale farm enterprises and is seasonal in terms of avail-

able jobs. As a result of this, the target area is characterized by high unemployment and fast-growing migration of young people to Baku or CIS countries such as the Russian Federation or Kazakhstan. The districts are heavily populated by internally displaced persons (IDPs) and they are in close vicinity to the Karabakh conflict zone.

Project activities

The project will conduct various activities to achieve its goal and objectives. These activities mainly include the following:

- a) On the seed component: 1) Capacity building in good business practice, self-regulation and quality assurance; 2) Temporary support to relevant market player (e.g., AKTIVTA) to develop and offer services to its members and seed suppliers; 3) Work with key information providers (e.g., media, AKTIVTA) to promote wider access to quality information and advice; 4) Work with importers, dealers and relevant stakeholder to improve performance in the distribution networks – e.g., action research about impact of expired/adulterated seeds and using the result to inform the industry and influence change; 5) research, sector mapping, gendered market mapping, other action research including economic feasibility studies for due diligence in the use of project funds for investments, communication and messaging support.
- b) On the strawberry value chain component: 1) Identify key players in the seedling supply chain. Work with the key players to facilitate improvements in the system that will make available the improved seedlings to small growers; 2) Identify key players in the marketing chain. Work with the key players to facilitate coordination efficiency between small growers and buyers. 3) Facilitate improvements in bulking / field level aggregation to achieve small grower efficiency in selling.

Expected results

Among different results, here are some of them the project aims to achieve:

- Economic opportunities of at least 1% of population under poverty line (or 1,700) in the target districts have increased;
- Organisational changes takes place in self-governance promoting participation, transparency and efficiency (at least 2 GG changes at associational level of market players – e.g., AKTIVTA, POs, feedback loop in the seed distribution network, input supply sector self-regulation)
- At least 50% of dealers and sub-dealers in the 3 Districts know where and how to get quality seeds, information and advice
- Production of improved strawberry varieties in the 3 Districts increases from zero (baseline) to at least 125 tonnes by October 2013
- Strawberry yields increase from 10 tonnes per hectare per season to at least 25 tonnes per hectare by end of September 2013 season
- Sustainable hub of improved seedlings is established in the District.



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