

Improving quality and supply of non-genetically modified cotton from Central Asia

Integrated Development Partnership in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

The challenge: Ensuring availability of non-genetically modified (GMO) cotton seed

Worldwide, demand for sustainably produced cotton is on the rise. While 85% of the cotton cultivated worldwide is GMO cotton, barely 0.4% of cultivated cotton is organic. The wide availability of GMO cotton leads to a high risk of contamination of non-GMO cotton, ending up with even less market availability of non-GMO cotton. Thus, companies seek for opportunities to source sustainably produced cotton to serve their customers' needs.

Smallholder farmers' income in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan largely depends on cash crops. Yet, their opportunities to gain access to higher-value markets for their crops and thus to improve their livelihoods are limited. One reason is the limited access to non-GMO cotton seed. This is due to cotton seed supply in the region being largely GMO-contaminated, exposing organic farmers to a constant risk of GMO-contamination.

Project Goal

The project aims to empower smallholder farmers and to improve the quality and supply of non-GMO cotton from Central Asia.

Project name	Improving quality and supply of non-GMO cotton from Central Asia
Project Format	Integrated Development Partnership
Project region	Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan
Project partners	GIZ Tajikistan, Fairtrade Germany, ALDI North Group, ALDI SOUTH, Bio Kishovarz, Bio Farmer, Fairtrade Asia Pacific
Duration	01.09.2018 – 30.04.2020

Project Budget

Table headline	Table headline
ALDI North Group	36.219,18
ALDI SOUTH	36.219,18
Fairtrade Germany	36.000,00
Bio Kishovarz & Bio Farmer	23.972,16
GIZ GmbH	88.120,31
TOTAL	220.530,83

Project Measures

The project aims to improve the availability of and the access to non-GMO cotton. To reach the project goal the following measures will be implemented:

- Training for farmers on seed production and multiplication;
- Actions to combat GMO-contamination;
- Enlargement of cultivable acreage for organic cotton and yield;
- Knowledge management and sharing.

The focus of the project is in Tajikistan. However, one organic certified cooperative in Kyrgyzstan is included through knowledge sharing, by regional exchange, and with specific measures supported by Fairtrade.

"Through the project, we reduced farmer's dependency from external agro-inputs, diversifying our income base." (Bio Kishovarz, March 2019)



From left to right:

- 1) Female farmers of Bio Farmer Cooperative, Kyrgyzstan
- 2) Storage of Fairtrade certified cotton at Bio Farmer Cooperative



From left to right:

1) Female farmers in Tajikistan

2) Raw cotton from the field

Project Benefits

The “Integrated Development Partnership” will directly improve the livelihood conditions of the targeted population by collective actions of private and public sectors such as:

- Improving farmers knowledge of sustainable cotton farming practices and the number of farmers producing organic cotton seeds;
- Enlarge sales volumes of Fairtrade certified seed cotton, thus reaching higher incomes for the involved farmers and their families;
- Implementing environmentally friendly production measures, lowering negative impact on the environment;
- Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), such as ending poverty and hunger, promoting sustainable economic growth and consumption whilst contributing to the protection of eco-systems.

Project Partners

ALDI Einkauf GmbH & Co. oHG (a company of the ALDI North Group) and ALDI International Services GmbH & Co. oHG (ALDI SOUTH Group)

As one of the best-known and most popular German retailers, ALDI has been providing millions of people with everyday essentials for generations. High quality at ALDI prices and a range of carefully selected food and non-food products ensure a pleasantly uncomplicated shopping experience for customers. As two individual company groups, the ALDI North Group and ALDI SOUTH Group operate over 10,000 stores throughout different countries in Europe as well as in Australia, China, and the US.

TransFair e.V. (Fairtrade Germany) and the Fairtrade Network of Asia & Pacific Producers

are non-profit organizations registered in Germany and Singapore. As a market initiative and a producer network they co-own Fairtrade International and jointly strive for a world in which all producers can enjoy secure and sustainable livelihoods, fulfil their potential and decide on their future. Fairtrade works through certification standards, producer advisory services, projects and programmes, consumer awareness raising and education, market linkages and advocacy.

Bio Kishovarz (Tajikistan)

was established in 2012 with the direct technical and financial support of GIZ and Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. The main objective is to ensure organic farming sustainability and to provide professional extension, machinery, certification, marketing and other services to more than 1.400 local farmers.

Bio Farmer (Kyrgyzstan)

was established in 2007 with the direct technical and financial support of GIZ and Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation. Bio-Farmer is certified Fairtrade and organic since 2008. Bio Farmer delivers professional services such as trainings, machinery, marketing and certification to a broad group of members, currently over 1.000 farmers.

GIZ Tajikistan

As part of GIZ Tajikistan’s activities within the TRIGGER II project, GIZ Tajikistan provides support by selecting and carrying out international certifications and accreditations (e.g. organic certificates or Fair Trade) that increase the product quality and enable small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to export goods. One impact of this intervention is to increase income of small-holder farmers, such as the members of Bio Kishovarz.

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Towards Rural Inclusive Growth and Economic Resilience
(TRIGGER II)
1/2 Huvaiddulloev Str., Qatari Diar Complex,
734049 Dushanbe, Tajikistan
Phone +992 446 00 107
giz-tadschikistan@giz.de
www.giz.d

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Text

Sebastian Berwanger

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