

UAKIS : Supporting an inclusive transition to a “green” economy in the Agri-food sector and developing a “climate-smart” Uzbek Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation System



Objectives of the project:

The overall objective of the Action is to contribute to an inclusive transition to a “green” economy in the Uzbekistan food and agriculture sector and to the implementation of a “climate-smart” Uzbek Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation System.

Background:

Uzbekistan is an arid country, with 70% of its land made up of arid and semi-arid areas. The World Resources Institute places Uzbekistan among the 25 most water-stressed nations in the world.¹ Water scarcity is further exacerbated by climate change.

Almost half of the population in Uzbekistan lives and works in rural areas and although the share of agriculture as a percentage of GDP has been declining steadily, it plays an important role in the socio-economic life of the country. The poorest population of Uzbekistan lives in the most arid parts of the country, is dependent on subsistence agriculture, and is facing increased vulnerability to changes in

¹ <https://www.wri.org/blog/2019/08/17-countries-home-one-quarter-world-population-face-extremely-high-water-stress>

climate conditions and natural resources availability². Intensive farming practices have degraded much of the available arable land and depleted water resources.

Irrigation currently consumes over 90% of total water withdrawals. Despite agricultural reforms to improve irrigation efficiency, Uzbekistan faces significant challenges with desertification and water scarcity – all of which are exacerbated by climate stressors. Pastures constitute almost half of the total land resources in Uzbekistan, while over 70% of the total pasture area is degraded.

Uzbekistan has taken steps to include climate change considerations across national policy. One of the initiatives towards this was the approval of the Strategy for the transition of Uzbekistan to the green economy for the period 2019-2030, which includes climate change considerations.

The government has adopted an Uzbek Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation System (UAKIS) Strategy and Roadmap, which aim to provide effective solutions to overcome these challenges. Specifically, it seeks to (i) establish a supportive and flexible system and range of services to promote quicker innovation with better valorization of existing and new knowledge and (ii) develop more effective climate adaptation and mitigation strategies and actions. By developing effective linkages between agricultural research, education and training, and advisory services, and promoting their alliance with the private sector, active and meaningful participation of agricultural producers and agri-food businesses will be fostered in the delivery of all UAKIS services.

A range of financial and technical assistance support is being mobilized to facilitate the implementation of this strategy. The focus is primarily upon knowledge development and accelerating learning in the first stages of development. To complement this approach, more direct support for the development and promotion of innovation is needed.

Theory of Change

The project's Theory of Change (TOC) is based on the understanding that the pathway to sustainability and resilience requires systemic changes that will facilitate the country's transition towards: (i) reshaping its long-term vision for resilient and socially inclusive development in selected regions; (ii) improving the ability at national and local levels to establish and maintain strong and sustainable institutional and knowledge-based networks for risk-informed, people-centred and long lasting development of agri-food production; (iii) scaling up data-driven and gender-responsive smart policies and solutions to address climate change impact, namely adaptation and disaster resilience towards more green and effective agriculture.

The project will contribute to building up the climate-resilience of rural livelihoods and improve the employment and incomes of families, including women in farming and agri-business. Greening and climate-related concerns will be mainstreamed into decision-making at all levels, facilitating climate-resilient development from the community level up to the regional and national levels.

The overall project strategy aims to raise awareness, to improve evidence-based knowledge for climate-related resilience risks and effective responses, to empower stakeholders, including communities to become more resilient, to improve regulatory frameworks through dialogue with actors, and finally, to provide a secure foundation for cooperative action to respond to the threats and risks posed by climate change due to the inability of the current system to respond appropriately.

² State Committee for Statistics and Uzhydromet related to Karakalpakstan

The specific objectives will support this strategy:

1. In line with the broader Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and SDG commitments of the Government of Uzbekistan, to support knowledge-based development and operationalization of policies, and a regulatory framework enabling the promotion of “green” investments across the agri-food value chains;
2. To establish a range of ‘Agri-food Innovation Support and Brokering Services’ (integrated into UAKIS) that will play a crucial role in galvanizing local knowledge and capacities, mobilizing public and private funding, and scaling-up of climate-smart investments to respond to the current and future needs of farmers and agri-businesses;
3. To support practical realization of innovative projects at ‘farm level’, targeting primarily smallholder and family farmers, farmer cooperatives, and micro-agri-business, which will allow piloting and demonstrating ways of achieving mitigation, adaptation and where applicable, post COVID-19 “green” transformational recovery pathways.

Main activities

Establish Agri-food Innovation Support and Brokerage Services

The project will establish Agri-food Innovation Support and Brokerage Services as a core component of the new AKIS support infrastructure. The aim will be to build sustainable technical support structures and services to help develop initiatives that connect key Uzbek actors with an interest in, and ideas on, finding innovative solutions to shared agri-food problems.

Activity 1.1. Support and facilitate improvements in the policy and regulatory framework for effective implementation of the Agri-food Innovation Support and Brokerage Services and for scaled-up climate action in the agri-food sector. The project will support further regulatory strengthening of the UAKIS network and will address existing policy and regulatory barriers to scaled-up climate action and “green” transition in the food and agriculture sector.

Activity 1.2. Building institutional capacity and partnerships among UAKIS stakeholders to effectively deliver Agri-food Innovation Support and Brokerage Services. The action will establish and empower a system of advisory extension services to deliver science-based information and advice to farmers on climate risk management, adaptation and low carbon technologies, access to markets, export readiness, trade regimes and trade financing.

Activity 1.3. Participatory planning and identification of project portfolios. The project will utilize a combination of quantitative analysis and consultation with key stakeholders, particularly farmers and local agricultural experts, to set up a cyclical system of identification and updating of portfolios of projects to be supported through the Agri-food Innovation Support and Brokerage Services.

Activity 1.4. Establishing a continuous feedback, learning and knowledge management system under UAKIS. The Action will build the capacity of the UAKIS network to collect, codify, analyze, and utilize lessons to establish a continuous learning curve as part of a system innovation approach. In doing so, an evidence-based monitoring and evaluation system will be established to feed into the decision-making and investment planning process in the agriculture sector.

Agri-food Innovation Operational Groups and Partnerships

The project approach and work methods will be guided by the EU EIP-AGRI Innovation Partnership framework for the establishment of 'Operational Groups', aiming to bring together a range of partners with a common interest in specific and practical innovation projects.

Activity 2.1. Establishing the Agri-food Innovation Operational Groups and soliciting innovative proposals on climate-smart agriculture and transition to “green” agri-food value chains. The project will develop a plan and framework conditions for the formation of Agri-food Innovation Operational Groups (AIOGs) and partnerships for consultations and coordinated action with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Innovations, and the Council of farmers, dehkan farms and owners of homestead lands of Uzbekistan.

Activity 2.2. Delivery of training, capacity building and technical advice to the members and partners of the Agri-food Innovation Operational Groups. The project will cooperate with local agricultural colleges, extension centres and other service providers to implement a series of capacity building and training interventions targeting farmers and pastoralists in target regions.

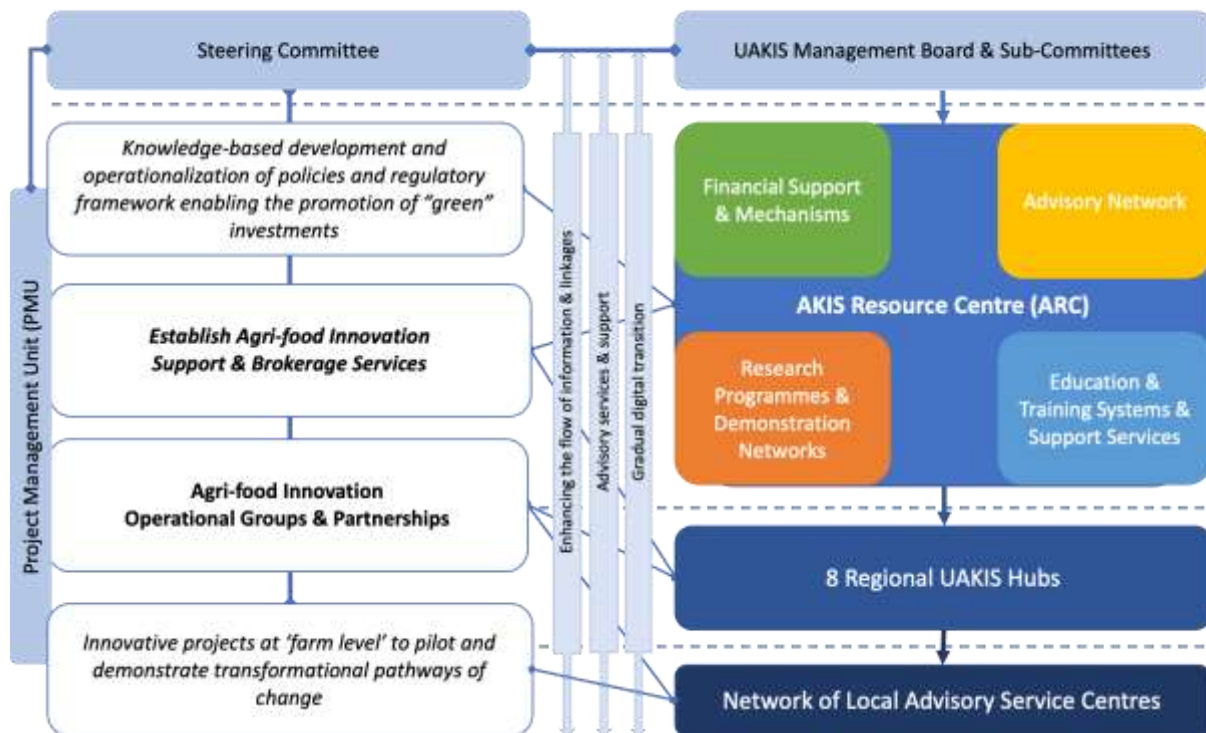
Activity 2.3. Delivering targeted financial support and investments for innovative projects with climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits. The project will establish partnerships with financial institutions (microcredit organizations and banking sector) to deliver effective financial support and incentives for scaled-up climate action among farming communities.

Activity 2.4. Innovation networking and exchange program to promote uptake in other regions/areas. All Operational Groups supported through the project will be obliged, as a pre-condition for receiving support, to share and report all their achievements in stimulating innovation within the UAKIS network (and other relevant networks both domestically and internationally).

Organization:

The ***Project Management Unit*** (PMU) will be hosted by UNDP Uzbekistan and will be led by a Technical Lead Adviser (International) and a full-time National Project Coordinator, supported by technical and administrative staff. The PMU will receive technical and administrative support from the UNDP Uzbekistan Programme and Operations teams. The Quality Assurance role will be carried out by the UNDP Country Office in Uzbekistan.

Operationalisation Support Structure



Implementing organizations:

The project will be implemented by UNDP in Uzbekistan.

Project partners

- Ministry of Innovative Development
- Ministry of Water Resources
- Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction
- Ministry for Support of Mahalla and Family
- State Committee for Land Resources, Geodesy, Cartography and State Cadaster
- State Committee for Forestry
- Council of Farmers
- State Committee for Veterinary Medicine and Livestock Development
- Regional / District Khokimiyats
- Research institutes

Other main stakeholders: Herders, crop farmers and forest user groups, units and their enterprises and professional organizations in the target areas.

Localisation: Uzbekistan, pilot Regions are Tashkent, Kashkadarya and Ferghana

Funding and co-funding: European Union - EUR 4.150.000

Duration:

4 years – 30 September 2021 - 30 September 2025



The Ministry of Agriculture
of the Republic of Uzbekistan

