



Deputy Minister Abdulkadir Polat and FAO Assistant Representative Ayşegül Selşik visit the stands of FAO projects on forestry, including “Strengthening Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Forest Landscapes in the Kazdağları Region of Türkiye” and the FAO-Türkiye Forestry Partnership Programme.

What’s inside?

● IN THE SPOTLIGHT

FAO is implementing key projects in Türkiye to promote sustainable forest management and conservation. Notable among these are the New Non-timber Forest Products project, and capacity-building projects on forestry and biodiversity in Central Asian countries.

● HARVEST TIME

FAO’s Cooperative Support Programme in Türkiye strengthens over 30 cooperatives in 16 provinces, focusing on women, youth, rural and vulnerable

WOMEN’S POWER

Beijing+30: A Renewed Call for Action! 30 years later we must recommit to women’s equality.

● PROGRAMMES IN ACTION

A new step in achieving safe food and healthy nutrition

Five Farmer Field Schools to open in Izmir and Manisa provinces

Kızık Pears of Bolu’s Seben District planted for future generations

From the Country Representative

Forests cover 31 percent of the world’s land, and are essential for nourishing the planet. They provide everything from wild foods to freshwater, shelter to energy, sustaining billions of people and an immense diversity of life.

Yet, we are losing these vital ecosystems at an alarming pace due to deforestation, desertification and land degradation. On top of that, climate change impacts including but not limited to increasingly frequent wildfires and pest outbreaks are further threatening their survival.

But the situation is not without hope! A number of different solutions offer avenues for collaboration. For instance, one promising idea is to integrate agriculture and forests. Another is to develop well-calibrated financial mechanisms



Viorel Gutu, Assistant Director General/Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia.

to support the development of a forest-based bioeconomy. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), we are implementing many sustainable forestry projects across Türkiye. Through the FAO-Türkiye Forestry Partnership Programme (FTFP), we are jointly investing in change across Central Asia and beyond through impactful projects. For example, within the scope of FTFP, we are:

- restoring degraded lands and boosting livelihoods in Africa;
- enhancing national capacities for large-scale forest and woodland restoration in Central Asia;
- strengthening technical knowledge on forestry with a dedicated project to enhance the capacity of the Turkish International Forestry Training Centre;
- promoting regional cooperation and state-of-the-art practices for biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Montenegro.

Furthermore, our non-timber forest products development project is setting exciting goals for a more sustainable and efficient forest economy.

Small-scale farming is the backbone of the agricultural sector. Around 90 percent of the world's 570 million farms are family-owned and operated. Accordingly, the most important means to increase the resilience of smallholders in the face of today's increasingly challenging conditions are to support cooperatives and to value women's labour. In Türkiye, FAO provides support to 30 cooperatives in 19 different provinces, and will increase this support in the coming period.

Women comprise 45 percent of the agricultural labour force globally, although this share varies by country. However, despite their significant contributions, women often do not receive fair compensation. Over 90 percent of women lack social security coverage and are paid considerably less than their male counterparts.

On this note, it is timely to recall the importance of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – a call to advance gender equality and empower women everywhere, including in rural and agricultural settings.

Happy reading

In the spotlight

Towards spring

Spring means renewal and revitalization. Nature wakes up from its long slumber and begins to produce and

create itself again. For this reason, 21 March is celebrated every year as International Forestry Day. This spring, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Türkiye, together with the General Directorate of Forestry, organized an event entitled "Forest Foods for a Sustainable Future", emphasizing the critical role of forest ecosystems in food security and nutrition.

FAO Forestry Officer Sooyeon Laura Jin delivered a presentation at the event on the topic of "Forests, Food Security and Nutrition from a Global Perspective", exploring the role of forests in food systems around the world.



FAO workshop launched project on forest value chains.

New project for non-forestry products launched

An online inception workshop for the project "Strengthening Small-Scale Producers for Income-Generating Opportunities in Non-Wood Forest Products Based on Value Chain Development", implemented under the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), took place on 27 March. Carried out in collaboration with the General Directorate of Forestry (OGM) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the project aims to enhance the capacities of small-scale producers of non-wood forest products (NWFPs) in Türkiye, improve their market access, and develop value chains for selected medicinal and aromatic plants.

Project activities, which will continue until September 2026, focus on enhancing the technical capacity of the Afyonkarahisar Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Centre and developing its production through a value chain perspective. Additionally, the project aims to train and support women producers in rural areas and facilitate their integration into the market with high value-added products.



Products of the Afyonkarahisar Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Centre.

Building a Green Wall in Africa

Covering 31 percent of the Earth's surface, forests and their functions are irreplaceable for the continuation of life on the planet. The conservation of forests, which account for a significant share of the global economy, and sustainable forest policies are among the most important goals of FAO. In Türkiye, many projects have been and continue to be implemented for this purpose. One of these is the FAO-Türkiye Forestry Partnership Programme (FTFP).

The FAO-Türkiye Forestry Partnership Programme invests in change across Central Asia and beyond through impactful projects. Rooted in strong collaboration, FAO and Türkiye are:

- supporting the Great Green Wall in Eritrea, Mauritania and Sudan through the BRIDGES Project, restoring degraded lands and boosting livelihoods;
- enhancing national capacities for large-scale forest and woodland restoration in Central Asia via the FRIENDS Project;
- strengthening technical knowledge on forestry with a dedicated project to enhance the capacity of the Turkish International Forestry Training Centre;
- promoting regional cooperation and state-of-the-art practices for biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management in Central Asia, the Caucasus and Montenegro through the Improving Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry Project.

Advancing biodiversity and sustainable forestry in Central Asia through regional cooperation

The newly launched project "Improving Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry" under the FTFP aims to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Through regional cooperation, capacity development and pilot initiatives, the project will equip national administrations with state-of-the-art management

planning systems for forests and protected areas. By mainstreaming biodiversity conservation with sustainable forestry practices, the initiative will contribute to ecosystem resilience, carbon storage and water regulation, ensuring long-term environmental benefits. A strong emphasis on knowledge-sharing will further embed best practices within national and regional forestry networks.

Forests provide food, medicine and livelihoods for billions of people:

- More than 5 billion people around the world use forest and non-timber forest products for food, medicine and livelihoods.
- Over 2 billion people rely on wood and other traditional fuels for cooking.
- Forests are crucial for agriculture.
- Forests serve as food safety nets in times of crisis.
- Forested watersheds provide freshwater to more than 85 percent of the world's major cities, and sustainable forest management has the potential to enhance water quality for over 1.7 billion people residing in large urban areas, contributing to their food and water security.
- In some countries and regions, forests and trees provide around 20 percent of the income for rural households.

The LDN in the Upper Sakarya Basin initiative was not just a project, but a pioneer of change

The closing meeting of the project "Contributing to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting by Demonstrating the LDN Approach in the Upper Sakarya Basin for Scaling up at National Level", financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented jointly by FAO, the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, took place in Ankara with a high level of participation.

The five-year project, implemented in the provinces of Ankara, Eskişehir and Kütahya, is notable for its success. Integrated approaches developed within the project have brought forth innovative solutions that combine sustainable natural resource management with rural development. Moreover, people working in the field have adopted these approaches resulting in lasting change.

This project amounted to more than just an environmental innovation, it proved to be a turning point in achieving sustainable development, rural welfare and environmental balance. The successful implementation of the "Land

Degradation Neutrality” approach at the national level, particularly in the Upper Sakarya Basin, has proven that it is possible to create a development model in harmony with nature.



The LDN project is a source for new projects.

Harvest time

30 cooperatives supported in 16 provinces

TFAO in Türkiye’s Cooperative Support Programme focuses on cooperatives involving women, rural populations, youth and vulnerable groups, aiming to achieve significant economic and social gains. Launched in 2019 and covering more than 30 cooperatives across 16 provinces, this programme strengthens cooperatives through capacity building, provision of essential equipment and access to broader marketing networks. Training topics include financial literacy, cooperative management, business models and business plans, product development, branding and packaging, and e-commerce integration.

One of the programme’s key accomplishments is connecting women-led cooperatives with the digital marketplace. Through online sales platforms like HepYerinden.coop, local products can now reach consumers across Türkiye, expanding each cooperative’s market share. FAO-Türkiye experts provide on-site training and foster collaboration networks, empowering women to enhance their leadership and decision-making roles while boosting production capabilities. Consequently, these cooperatives not only improve their economic viability but also serve as a model for community solidarity and increase women’s and young farmers’ employment opportunities.

The cooperative programme continues to grow day by day. Starting with just one project, this programme is now becoming even stronger with the support of cooperatives in all projects run by FAO.

The Kaz Mountains Project, supported by Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding, is an example aimed at

forest villagers. New Year wreaths or door/wall decorations made from non-wood forest products provide an opportunity for forest waste to gain value. These wreaths, produced from the rich and diverse natural vegetation of the Kaz Mountains, use products such as pine, pinecones, dried tree branches and acorns.

Forest villagers are also harvesting medicinal and aromatic plants from forests, under the coordination of the provincial directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, for cooperative member villagers to market. Additionally, there are plans to support the production of local foods like honey, tomato paste and butter, which are grown or produced in the forest. A market will be created for both handmade and food products, and efforts will be made to connect these products with customers.

This project highlights the sustainable use of natural resources and the importance of supporting local economies through cooperatives. It not only creates income opportunities for local communities but also promotes environmental sustainability. By establishing markets for handmade and food products, these goods will have the chance to reach a broader customer base. This will help preserve cultural heritage while providing economic benefits to local producers.

Such projects can strengthen the success of cooperatives in the long run and enable the proper management of natural resources.



The Ahtamara Women's Cooperative in Van receiving material support from FAO.

Women’s power

Beijing+30: A Renewed Call for Action 30 years later, we must recommit to women's equality

In 1995, women from around the world met in Beijing for a groundbreaking conference on women’s rights. They created a plan called the “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action” to achieve equality for women. Thirty years

later, it is clear that no country has fully reached that goal. Even though many have tried, progress has been slow and uneven. Women and girls still face huge problems: more women live in poverty and women are often left out of important decisions. Global poverty and unfair distribution of wealth make it even harder to reach the Beijing goals.

At FAO, we promise to do more to support access to opportunities, providing training and ensuring women have equal rights to access employment, by recognizing how much unpaid work women do, encouraging families to share tasks equally and by taking steps to support women who are at high risk of poverty. This includes making sure they have enough food, providing assistance for women in rural areas, and supporting sustainable agriculture and rural development.

On this 30th anniversary, let's promise to work harder. Let's overcome the obstacles and build a world where women and girls truly have equal opportunities.

Programmes in action

A new step in achieving safe food and healthy nutrition

A technical cooperation project launched by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to support small-scale food producers in Türkiye kicked off on March with an inception workshop in Ankara.

The project, entitled "Food Safety and Nutrition Capacity Development to Support Small-Scale Producers in Shortening Food Supply Chains", emphasizes the pivotal role of small-scale producers in the transformation of agrifood systems. It examines how these producers can overcome the challenges they face in complying with national legislation and European Union (EU) standards when supplying products to the nearest point of sale. The project also highlights the key role these producers play in establishing shorter food supply chains.

While ensuring food safety, the project aims to preserve traditional production methods, promote a "safe food culture" and enhance knowledge of healthy nutrition. Additionally, it proposes a series of actions to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and to support small-scale producers in shortening their food supply chains.



Project inception workshop held in Ankara.

Five Farmer Field Schools to open in Izmir and Manisa provinces

The promotion of integrated water management among farmers in the Gediz Basin region is the rationale behind the establishment of five new Farmer Field Schools in Izmir and Manisa provinces. The initiative forms part of the "Sustainable and Integrated Water Resources Management Project in the Gediz Basin, Türkiye", funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and jointly implemented by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

A total of 44 participants, including 13 women and 31 men, attended the two-day Farmer Field Schools Opening and Curriculum Development Workshop, as well as Training of Trainers activities held in Manisa. These events marked the beginning of a capacity-building process for integrated water management within the framework of sustainable land management – a key objective of the project in the Gediz Basin.

Kızık Pears of Bolu's Seben District planted for future generations

The Kızık Pear, unique to the Seben district of Bolu and currently undergoing Geographical Indication registration, has been planted for future generations. Under the Agroecology project, conducted in collaboration with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Directorate of Agricultural Reform and financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), a total of 1 300 Kızık Pear saplings were distributed to farmers.

Significant progress has been made in efforts to protect and increase the production of this unique pear variety, which is predominantly grown in the villages of Kızık, Kuzgölcük and Kabak in Seben. The saplings delivered to producers were planted in the soil and watered for the first time. The event, which attracted great interest from the local community, emphasized the contribution of the Kızık Pear to sustainable agriculture and its economic value.

Officials from the Directorate of Agricultural Reform stated that this initiative aims to preserve a fruit specific to the region and also represents an important step in supporting rural development. FAO officials highlighted the importance of preserving local varieties for biodiversity and confirmed that support for farmers would continue. The Kızık Pear, with its unique aroma and resilience, holds an important place in regional agriculture. The activities carried out within the scope of the project aim to both promote this valuable variety and open up new income opportunities for local farmers.

The Kızık Pear saplings, which have taken root in Seben's fertile soil, will continue to bear fruit over the years, preserving the region's agricultural heritage.



Project inception workshop held in Ankara.

FAO workshop strengthens Tajikistan's wheat rust preparedness

FAO hosted a three-day workshop in Dushanbe, Tashkent to develop a science-based National Strategy and Contingency Plan for wheat rust disease prevention and management. The event brought together policymakers, researchers and agricultural stakeholders to strengthen national and regional capacities.

Wheat rust diseases pose a major threat to food security in Central Asia and the Caucasus due to their airborne spread. FAO's CAC-Rust project, funded by the FAO-Türkiye Partnership Programme, supports regional coordination in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Türkiye.

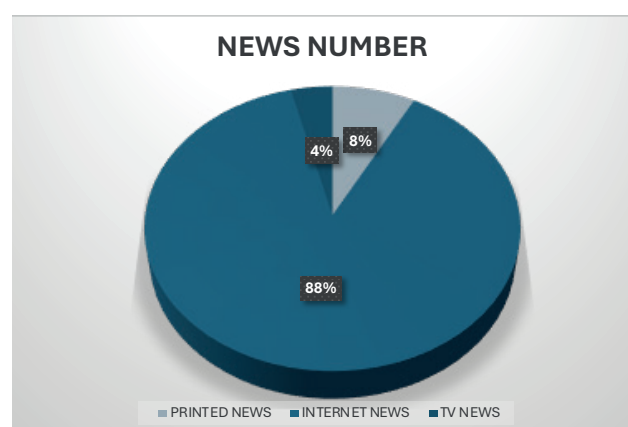
The workshop facilitated stakeholder consultations, enhanced collaboration with international researchers, and provided training on breeding rust-resistant wheat varieties. Experts from FAO, Türkiye and the CIMMYT-International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre, shared insights on surveillance, seed production and disease-resistant breeding techniques.

FAO Representative Aghasi Harutyunyan emphasized the importance of a science-based strategy for resilient wheat production. The workshop concluded with action planning for improved disease management, reinforcing FAO's commitment to sustainable agriculture and food security in the region.

Media and publications

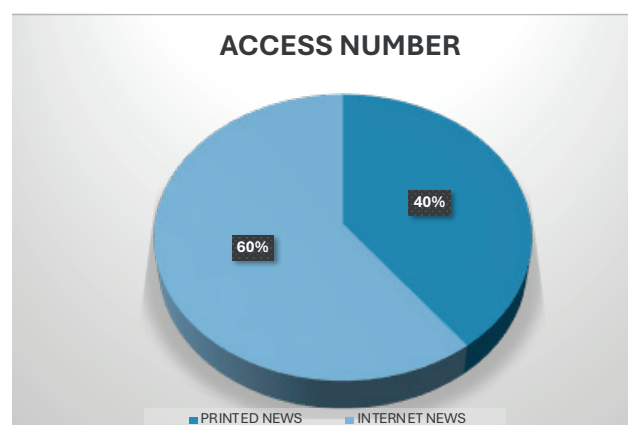
NEWS NUMBERS (April)

NEWS TYPE	NEWS NUMBERS
PRINT NEWS	849
INTERNET NEWS	6 462
TV NEWS	350



ACCESS NUMBERS (April)

NEWS TYPE	ACCESS NUMBER
PRINT NEWS	21 341 779
INTERNET NEWS	29 795 338



As part of the project “Strengthening Goose Meat Production through Rural Tourism and Gastronomy”, implemented by FAO in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, a gastronomic event was organized at the Özyeğin University campus in Istanbul. At the event, Michelin-starred chef Emre Şen

prepared a special menu using Kars goose. The dishes from the menu were then served to the event attendees and the university’s gastronomy students. Chef Emre Şen also announced that the recipe for the special Kars goose cracker in the menu could be used freely by any who wished to do so.

ONE SHOT: Photo of the month



The designations employed and the presentation of material in this information product do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.



Some rights reserved. This work is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution - 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0).

Contact information:

FAO Subregional Office for Central Asia
Email: FAO-SEC@fao.org and FAO-Turkiye@fao.org
Website: <http://www.fao.org/turkiye/en/>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Ankara, Türkiye