



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS THROUGH WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

In Azerbaijan, rural women's empowerment through agriculture has great potential, considering that 32 percent of female entrepreneurs are engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing, compared with 24.4 percent of male entrepreneurs. In addition, 77 percent of women in Azerbaijan reside in rural areas. These statistics show how women play a significant role in agriculture. However, they face a number of challenges, such as gender pay gap, informality of jobs, a triple work burden (housework, working on household production and wage work), and poor access to social services, among others. In this context, few efforts, from either public or private providers, have been made in the country to comprehensively assess the needs of women farmers, and to approach them as a particular target group for training and advisory services. Against this background, the project was designed to cover both grassroots-level problems by improving rural women's access to agricultural information, knowledge, credit, means for processing, and policy-level matters by strengthening gender-responsive rural advisory services and creating a gender-responsive policy environment.



### WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project successfully addressed some of the major constraints on women's economic empowerment in the country. This was achieved in a number of ways, including strengthening national capacities to integrate gender and social exclusion concerns into mainstream policies and programmes. In this context, the first comprehensive assessment of gender issues in agriculture and rural development sectors in the country was produced, the country gender assessment (CGA), which can serve as an analytical base for country-level policy and programming. In addition, several meetings and workshops were organized to build the capacities and skills of relevant stakeholders engaged in agriculture and rural development, such as a gender mainstreaming workshop on gender-responsive policy and programme formulation and implementation, among others. The project also significantly increased the capacities and skills of rural women beneficiaries. A needs assessment was conducted on women farmers, and 277 project beneficiaries from 12 project target regions were provided with online and onsite training on vegetable and fruit growing, cattle breeding, poultry raising, beekeeping, pest management, agrotourism, and business plan development. In addition, gender-sensitive information materials were produced and disseminated, giving visibility to the important role of women in agriculture and rural development in the country. By the end of the project, 245 beneficiaries had been provided with small agricultural tools and equipment, based on the business plans they had prepared to support their production.

### KEY FACTS

**Latest Approved Budget**  
USD 800 000

**Duration**  
January 2020-December 2022

**Resource Partners**  
Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, FAO-Azerbaijan Partnership Programme (FAPP)

**Partners**  
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Republic of Azerbaijan

**Beneficiaries**  
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA); State Agency on Agrarian Credits & Development under MoA; State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs; Azerbaijan Rural Women's Association; Azerbaijan Women's Entrepreneurship Development Association; State Agro Trade Company; rural women and girls

# IMPACT

It is expected that the project interventions will contribute to improving rural women's food and nutrition security, increasing their incomes, enhancing their participation and voice in relevant institutions and decision-making processes; as well as to producing more gender-responsive policy environments.

# ACTIVITIES

- FAO Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool (GRAST) translated into Azerbaijani, and training on improving access of women farmers to rural advisory services (RAS) organized for 45 RAS providers, based on GRAST tool.
- Gender mainstreaming action plan produced for MoA, including a wide range of commitments aimed at mainstreaming gender aspects into agriculture and rural development policy, planning and research.
- 33 staff members from different agencies under MoA trained on gender equality and agriculture issues, based on needs assessment report, CGA and GRAST.
- International Rural Women's Day and World Food Day marked with series of events organized in Tovuz, Gakh regions and Baku, attended by over 100 project beneficiaries.
- Community-related activities conducted in five priority communities, reaching 99 participants, focusing on gender equality in agriculture, women's role in rural economy, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Study tour to Türkiye organized for nine participants, to facilitate improvements in relevance and accessibility of RAS for rural women.
- Ten-module training series on beekeeping conducted for 51 women beekeepers.
- 245 business plans produced by project beneficiaries, based on Business Development Training sessions, and approved, for which technical specifications were further defined, and procurement and delivery procedures were finalized. The relevant technical and equipment maintenance support was provided to the beneficiaries.
- Fair organized to increase market access of women in Zagatala.
- Four agricultural production cooperatives established.
- Advisory Panel Meeting organized (31 October 2022) with participation of key project stakeholders, to conduct discussions on sustainability of key project outputs in order to contribute to creation of an enabling environment, which is key to women's economic empowerment and sustainable economic growth.
- "Sovgat" brand established to promote and organize sales of beneficiaries' selected products.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## Project Title

Improved food security and rural livelihoods through women's economic empowerment – WEP

## Project Code

FAO: UTF/AZE/015/AZE

## Contact

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