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INTRODUCTION AND PROMOTION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR ADOPTING BEST TECHNOLOGIES FOR HORTICULTURE

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SDGs:



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The Kyrgyz Republic

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Contact Info:

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Implementing Partners

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry (MAWRPI), Kyrgyz National Agrarian University and Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture.

Beneficiaries

Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry (MAWRPI), staff, specialists from MAWRPI departments, the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University, the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture, the Scientific and Production Center for Forest Research, Kyrgyz Association of Forest and Land Users, National Academy of Science of Kyrgyz Republic, Seed Association of Kyrgyzstan, The State Commission on Variety and Hybrids Testing, farmers, seedling producers, and rural advisory services.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

UNSDCF 2023-2027 Strategic Outcome 2: By 2027, the well-being of the population of Kyrgyzstan will have improved through the further rollout of a green economy based on sustainable and healthy food systems, natural resource management and effective migration processes by accelerating the use of gender-transformative social and technological innovations and entrepreneurship.

CPF 2023-2027: Output 2.1: Green economic growth is accelerated through increased entrepreneurship and employment opportunities in the agrifood sector, including through the sustainable use of natural resources.

Output 2.2: Food system sustainability is enhanced through a more efficient and inclusive approach that ensures healthy and quality nutrition for the population.



BACKGROUND

Agriculture in the Kyrgyz Republic faces significant challenges, particularly affecting its promising horticulture sector. Smallholder farmers are the backbone of agricultural production in the country but often struggle with limited access to quality inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, improved planting materials, appropriate technologies, and technical knowledge. Although the Kyrgyz Republic has a comparative advantage in stone fruit production, farmers and producers of seedlings and planting materials lack the capacity to meet market demand in terms of both quality and quantity.

This gap has led to increasing dependence on imported materials and seedlings, raising concerns over their applicability to local conditions. These systemic issues not only undermine the country's potential but pose threats to food security through the loss of locally adapted varieties and diminished genetic agrobiodiversity.

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry (MAWRPI) requested support in developing and implementing a medium-term Programme for the Development of Horticulture and Viticulture in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2025-2029. This technical cooperation project was designed to enhance knowledge and skills in fruit cultivation, establish demonstration sites to showcase innovative techniques and create policy instruments to guide the sustainable development of the horticultural sector in the Kyrgyz Republic.

IMPACT

The horticulture sector in the Kyrgyz Republic has been strengthened through improved institutional capacity, implementation of best practices, and adoption of innovative technologies for planting materials and fruit production. This will contribute to increasing agricultural productivity, improving food security, and enhancing the livelihoods of small-scale farmers across the country.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

In collaboration with the MAWRPI, the project successfully established two nurseries and three demonstration fields for fruit and berry production and developed a national programme on horticulture development, complete with a road map and action plan for effective sector management.

Twenty technical specialists (55 percent women) from various institutions were trained in advanced horticulture technologies, seedling production and nursery management. Participants included representatives from government departments, research institutions and educational organizations. Training materials were developed with the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture, covering topics such as nursery establishment, clonal rootstock cultivation, vegetative propagation and plant protection. Additionally, training modules and programmes were adapted to farmers' language and needs.

The project established two nurseries (3 ha each) and three demonstration plots (0.5 ha each) in Chui and Issyk-Kul oblasts. The nurseries were equipped with tractors, fencing, drip irrigation systems and gardening tools. High-quality clonal rootstocks adapted to local conditions were propagated to enable affordable seedling production.

Twenty technical specialists and 40 farmers were exposed to improved apple, cherry, pear, apricot and berry varieties, as well as innovative technologies, including trellis gardening and protective measures against adverse weather conditions.

Training sessions were conducted for 40 farmers in Chui and Issyk-Kul on fruit and berry crop production technologies and seedling production methods. Topics included soil management, plant protection and tree formation techniques. A specialized training for 52 participants (46 percent women) from four oblasts covered nursery management and global horticulture trends. Knowledge dissemination was enhanced through field days, four technical brochures and media outreach.

The project supported the development of the national horticulture programme through four regional round tables, engaging 157 stakeholders (26 percent women). A sector assessment identified challenges and recommended solutions. This participatory approach culminated in the formal adoption of the Program for the Development of Horticulture and Viticulture in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2025-2029 by the Cabinet of Ministers (Order No. 633-r, 14 October 2024).

Additional support was provided for specialized programmes on ferula and saffron cultivation. A database of fruit nurseries was established, with 14 farms receiving official nursery status.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

All planned activities were implemented on time in accordance with the work plan, with only minor adjustments. Round-table discussions were slightly delayed at the MAWRPI's request. Due to their proximity, two round tables (Talas and Chui) were merged and held in Bishkek, resulting in four round tables covering all five regions.

Additional funds were requested and approved, adjusting the original budget to account for the procurement of rootstocks and seedlings, which were provided to the established nurseries and demonstration fields.

All planned procurements were completed on time, except for the gardening tools, which were delayed due to the need for a new tender. Savings from the project budget were used for additional purchases, including fencing materials for the established nursery and 2 000 seedlings of five apple varieties.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

Although the Program for the Development of Horticulture and Viticulture in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2025-2029 was developed under the project, additional regulations are required to clearly define the rights, obligations and responsibilities of seed and planting material producers. Working with the MAWRPI, the project team created a roadmap for the programme, identifying challenges, priorities and recommendations. The MAWRPI, with support from international organizations and experts in the horticulture sector, will implement these documents. To ensure the successful implementation of the programme, it will be essential to produce enough seedlings to support the planned expansion of horticultural farms and fruit orchards.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The project engaged scientists and staff from the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture and the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University as trainers for technicians and farmers. They provided beneficiaries with knowledge of innovative technologies and skills on successful practices in horticulture, particularly in managing fruit nurseries. A sustainable relationship was formed between the partners, farmers, MAWRPI subordinate departments, and agricultural extension companies.

The two partners are ready to provide advisory services to farmers on organizing and managing fruit nurseries and growing seedlings and rootstocks. Farmers have expressed their interest in continuing the project's work and are willing to provide their land for experiments and student training. The project increased interest in high-quality seedlings and in promoting the acquired knowledge and skills amongst their peers, thereby ensuring sustainability of capacity development efforts.

2. Gender equality

The project was committed to ensuring women's representation in technical consultations, meetings and trainings, with at least 30 percent of overall participating farmers and specialists being women. Representation was even higher in training sessions, with female participation reaching 55 percent. The project contributed to gender equality by promoting equitable participation in decision-making, access to and control over resources and reduction in women's work burden.

3. Environmental sustainability

The project incorporated environmental sustainability principles into training materials for farmers and specialists, including Integrated Pest Management, climate-smart agriculture, and soil and water-saving technologies to build resilience and promote conservation. By emphasizing the cultivation of diverse fruit and berry crops, the project supports agrobiodiversity.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

Implementation involved the active participation from a wide range of stakeholders, which promoted human rights in accordance with principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency and human dignity. By strengthening the horticulture sector, the project contributed to improving livelihoods and food security. Enhanced fruit production capabilities and improved quality of seedlings will lead to increased availability of nutritious food and income-generating activities.

5. Technological sustainability

The project ensured technological sustainability by procuring equipment for the two nurseries and demonstration plots to sustain their operations past the project period. The Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture has also committed to using the established nurseries as training sites where farmers can continue to learn about nursery management, seedling cultivation technology, and innovative methods in horticulture. The demonstration sites will also act as platforms for the dissemination of these advanced technologies and innovations.

6. Economic sustainability

Scientific research will continue at the established nurseries, particularly on creating new domestic varieties and introducing promising international varieties into local production. It is expected that the nurseries will supply more than 200 000 high-quality rootstocks annually to the market within 2-3 years, significantly improving seedling quality and planting material availability for farmers and gardeners. Farmers showed high interest in purchasing these locally produced seedlings, which have been adapted to the natural and climatic conditions of the country. These efforts will promote local economic growth.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

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- ❑ **FAO.** 2024. *General assessment of the current situation in the horticulture and viticulture sectors in the Kyrgyz Republic.* Bishkek, FAO.
- ❑ **FAO.** 2024. *Program for growing Ferula (Ferula Assa-foetida L.) in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2024-2028.* Bishkek, FAO.
- ❑ **FAO.** 2024. *Program for the Development of Horticulture and Viticulture in The Kyrgyz Republic for 2025-2029.* Bishkek, FAO.
- ❑ **FAO.** 2024. *Training module: "Soil diversity, selection and preparation of soil for growing fruit and berry crops".* Bishkek, FAO. <https://ksria.kg/gallery/FAO.%202024.%20Training%20module%204.pdf>.
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- ❑ **FAO.** 2024. *Training module: Innovative technologies for plant protection in horticulture.* Bishkek, FAO. <https://ksria.kg/gallery/FAO.%202024.%20Training%20module%202.pdf>.
- ❑ **FAO.** 2024. *Training module: Planting, shaping and pruning the garden.* Bishkek, FAO. <https://ksria.kg/gallery/FAO.%202024.%20Training%20module%203.pdf>.
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- ❑ **FAO.** 2024. *In Kyrgyzstan, the Horticulture Development Programme was developed with FAO support.* 3 May 2024. Bishkek, FAO. [Cited 24 March 2024].
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- ❑ **FAO.** 2024. В Кыргызстане при поддержке ФАО разработана программа развития садоводства. 3 May 2024. Bishkek, FAO. [Cited 24 March 2024].
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- ❑ **FAO (@FAORussian).** 2024. “Садоводство играет ключевую роль в устойчивом развитии сельского хозяйства и продовольственной безопасности.” In: X, April 10, 2024. [Text & link]. [Cited 24 March 2024].
<https://x.com/FAORussian/status/1777985423899336878>.
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- ❑ **Sputnik Kyrgyzstan.** 2024. Питомники очень важны — эксперты о возрождении садоводства в КР. Sputnik Kyrgyzstan, 4 April 2024. Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. [Cited 24 March 2024].
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ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Horticulture sector in the Kyrgyz Republic strengthened		
Outcome	Improved availability and use of quality seedlings of fruit and berry crops produced using innovative technologies		
	Indicator	Increase in the number of nurseries producing certified fruit and berry saplings.	
	Baseline	0	
	End Target	Number of nurseries using innovative technologies and new varieties increased by 2.	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	<p>The project expanded existing knowledge and experience in the field of fruit growing and provided educational materials for further dissemination of knowledge gained during the project activities.</p> <p>Technical support was provided to the MAWRPI in establishing two nurseries for the production of fruit and berry saplings, as well as in developing the Program for the Development of Horticulture and Viticulture in the Kyrgyz Republic For 2025-2029, including a road map and action plan to facilitate effective organizational, economic, and managerial strategies in horticulture. The MAWRPI will continue to expand the number of private nurseries.</p> <p>Furthermore, the project provided methodological and technical support to establish nurseries and strengthen their managers' capacities to sustainably provide farmers with locally produced planting materials adapted to soil and climatic conditions, with climate adaptation in mind.</p> <p>As a result of the project, it is expected that the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture will continue working with private nurseries on introducing new varieties and disseminating modern, scientifically based rootstock of fruits and berry crops.</p>	
Output 1	Strengthened capacity of technical experts for promotion of innovative technologies on planting material and fruit production		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Technical experts received training on the concepts and practices of fruit/berry seedling production technologies.	At least 20 persons representing ministry, research institutes, NGOs and farmer organizations are trained at the national level.	Yes
	Baseline	Limited knowledge of few experts from NGOs.	
Comments	<p>The project trained 20 technical specialists and professionals who provide services in the horticulture sector. Training focused on advanced technologies in horticulture and fruit seedling production, as well as the establishment and management of nurseries. These enhanced capacities will ensure the adequate supply of quality seedlings to farmers and contribute to increased production of fruit and berry crops.</p> <p>Participants included specialists from the Department of Organic Agriculture, Forest Service, the Issyk-Kul experimental farm, the Department of Chemicalization, Plant Protection and Quarantine, Botanical Garden, Kyrgyz National Agrarian University, researchers from the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture, the Scientific and Production Center for Forest Research and experts from the Department of Agricultural Crops and Horticulture under the MAWRPI. Female participants represented 55 percent of the training beneficiaries.</p>		
Activity 1.1	Organize an inception workshop,		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 1.2	Develop training programmes and materials		
	Achieved	Yes	
Comments	<p>Under the auspices of the MAWRPI, the project held an inception workshop on 31 May 2023 with a wide range of stakeholders, to introduce and discuss the project's objectives and workplan, including the needs and priorities of the horticulture and nursery sector with a view to improve national horticulture programmes.</p> <p>Training programmes and materials were developed by the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture, the project's implementing partner, for 20 technical specialists from the MAWRPI, research and agricultural education institutes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and farmer organizations. Training participants were selected from two regions, Chui and Issyk-Kyl oblasts, based on applications from interested organizations.</p>		

Activity 1.3	Conduct training workshops		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Training workshops covered a wide range of issues in the technology of growing seedlings of fruit crops in a nursery. Participants studied diverse topics such as establishing and managing nurseries, novel methods and innovations in horticulture, clonal rootstock growing techniques, vegetative propagation of seedlings and effective use of fertilizers and plant protection products.</p> <p>According to the participants' feedback, the trainings significantly improved knowledge and skills, and provided opportunities to network and share experiences with other experts in the field. These results will contribute to strengthening the nursery development and horticulture sector in the country.</p>	
Output 2	Innovative technologies on planting materials and fruit production demonstrated and tested		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Demonstration sites for production of planting material and nursery are established.	Establishment of two nurseries (total 5 ha) and three demonstration plots (each 0.5 ha) for production of planting materials for farmers use.	Yes
Baseline	Limited production of planting materials using innovative technologies. No capacity to meet the climatic conditions of the area.		
Comments	<p>In collaboration with the MAWRPI and its subordinate departments and horticultural associations, the project identified smallholder farmers that were interested in establishing three demonstration plots and two nurseries. This was accomplished with the technical support of experimental farms of the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture.</p> <p>A key selection criterion was continued access to the demonstration plots for farmers even after project closure. The MAWRPI will use these plots for future trainings and knowledge sharing among farmers. High-quality planting material, such as clonal rootstocks adapted to local soil and climatic conditions, were propagated in the nurseries to enable production of seedlings and saplings at affordable prices for private nurseries and farmers.</p>		
Activity 2.1	Identification of nurseries and demonstration sites		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>The project defined two sites for establishing nurseries and three sites for demonstration plots (0.5 ha each in Chui and Issyk-Kul oblasts).</p> <p>Standard selection criteria include experience in growing and marketing fruit crop seedlings (nursery production), access to land and water resources, availability of basic agricultural equipment and the commitment to providing access to the demonstration plots to other farmers even after project closure.</p> <p>Two nurseries (3 ha each) were established in: Pervomaiskoe village (Sokuluk district, Chui oblast) and Chelpek village (Ak-Suu district, Issyk-Kul oblast).</p> <p>Three demonstration plots (0.5 ha in each site) were established in: Sokuluk district (Chui oblast), Issyk-Ata district (Chui oblast) and Ananievo village (Issyk-Kul district, Issyk-Kul oblast).</p>	
Activity 2.2	Establishment of nurseries and demonstration sites		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Two nurseries were established at the Kyrgyz Research Institute of Agriculture experimental farms in Pervomaiskoe village (Sokuluk district) and Chelpek village (Ak-Suu district) in Issyk-Kul oblast, covering 4 and 3 ha respectively.</p> <p>The capacity of these farms was strengthened through the provision of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Two 18 kW two-wheel tractors. – Fencing in Chelpek village for 4 ha. – Drip irrigation system for 4 ha. – Gardening tools (50 sets of seven items each). 	
Activity 2.3	Demonstration of improved varieties of rootstocks of fruits (apples, cherries, pears, apricot, berries)		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Through demonstration activities, 20 technical specialists and 40 small farmers were exposed to rootstocks of new varieties of apple and sweet cherry.</p> <p>At the demonstration plots, participants observed improved varieties of apple, pears, apricot, sweet cherry, and berries. Technical specialists were trained on new technologies for fruit and berry production, including intensive trellis gardening systems and the use of shading mesh for protection from wind and hail. The advantages of dwarf and semi-dwarf varieties in comparison to traditional methods were also exhibited.</p>	

Output 3	Capacities of smallholders developed on the use of innovative technologies for planting materials and fruit production		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Smallholder farmers received training on the concepts and practices of fruit/berry seedling production technologies.	Groups of at least 40 small holder farmers in four groups are established and trained in two different regions of the country.	Yes
Baseline	Limited knowledge of farmers.		
Comments	<p>The project successfully delivered training sessions to strengthen the capacity of farmers in fruit and berry crop production technologies and new seedling production methods – including fertilization, integrated pest management, irrigation, tree formation and pruning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Four trainings were delivered for 20 selected farmers in Chui region from 20 to 24 February 2024. – Four trainings were delivered for 20 selected farmers in Issyk-Kul region from 6 to 9 July 2024. <p>The following topics were presented to farmers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Soil diversity, selection and preparation for growing fruit and berry crops. – Growing seedlings of fruit and berry crops. – Innovative technologies for plant protection in horticulture. – Planting, shaping and pruning fruit trees. 		
Activity 3.1	Develop training programmes and materials		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Training programmes and materials were developed for 40 farmers and experts from the MAWRPI, research and agricultural education institutions, NGOs and farmer organizations at the national level through Letter of Agreement (LoA) services.	
Activity 3.2	Conduct training workshops		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>The state enterprise Kyrgyz Experimental Breeding Station for Sugar Beet was contracted through an LoA to provide technical support and agricultural extension services. They trained 40 small farmers, including ten female farmers, in Chui and Issyk-Kul regions. A total of four training sessions was held.</p> <p>In addition, two training sessions were conducted for smallholder farmers and technical specialists from Chui, Talas, Issyk-Kul and Naryn oblasts by an international consultant on horticulture. These trainings reached 52 participants, including 24 women. They covered a wide range of issues, including global trends in horticulture development, the organization and management of fruit and berry nurseries, advanced technologies, best practices, and innovative approaches to nursery management.</p>	
Activity 3.3	Promote results of project activities and innovative technologies on planting materials and fruit production with wider audiences		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Two field days were organized in collaboration with Kyrgyz Experimental Breeding Station for Sugar Beet and the international consultant on horticulture.</p> <p>Four brochures and training modules were developed and submitted to the MAWRPI for electronic dissemination on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Soil diversity, selection and preparation for growing fruit and berry crops. – Growing seedlings of fruit and berry crops. – Innovative technologies for plant protection in horticulture. – Planting, shaping and pruning the trees, <p>Publications were produced and a radio interview was broadcast on Kyrgyz media outlets.</p>	

Output 4	Technical support provided in the development of the State Program for the Development of Horticulture in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2024-2028		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	The main provisions and first draft of the Program for the Development of Horticulture and Viticulture in the Kyrgyz Republic For 2025-2029 were developed; round tables were organized to discuss problems and develop recommendations.	Organized and held five round tables in the regions: – Issyk-Kul and Naryn – Chui and Talas – Osh and Batken – Jalal-Abad – Bishkek Developed the main provisions and first draft of the Program.	Yes
Baseline	Lack of information and knowledge of a wide range of stakeholders in the development of horticulture, no provisions for the general policy in horticulture.		
Comments	To inform a wide range of stakeholders about the Program for the Development of Horticulture and Viticulture in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2025-2029., the FAO national consultant worked with the MAWRPI project coordinator to organize five round table meetings. The consultant presented both the data analysis and assessment of the current state of the horticulture sector in Kyrgyzstan, while the MAWRPI project coordinator presented the Program’s main provisions for discussion. The discussions were active and productive, generating suggestions and recommendations that were incorporated into the main document.		
Activity 4.1	Conducting round table meetings in 5 regions of the republic to discuss problems and develop the main provisions of the State Program for the Development of Horticulture in Kyrgyzstan		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The project provided technical support to the MAWRPI working group tasked with developing the Program for the Development of Horticulture and Viticulture in the Kyrgyz Republic For 2025-2029. In cooperation with the MAWRPI, four round tables were organized in: – Osh city for stakeholders from Osh and Batken (13-14 February 2024). – Jalal-Abad oblasts (14-15 February 2024). – Bishkek for stakeholders from Bishkek, Chui and Talas (30 April 2024). – Issyk-Kul oblast for stakeholders from Issyk-Kul and Naryn oblasts (Karakol 13 - 14 May 2024). In total, 157 stakeholders and representatives participated, including 41 women (26 percent). While five round tables were initially planned, at the recommendation of the MAWRPI working group, the Bishkek and Chui round tables were combined due to their proximity. Additionally, at the request of the MAWRPI, the project provided technical assistance to develop the following programmes: – Programme for growing <i>Ferula (Ferula Assa foetida L)</i> in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2024-2028, which was approved by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic on 9 September 2024. – Programme for growing saffron in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2025-2034, which is currently under revision at the MAWRPI	
Activity 4.2	Collection and analysis of data and assessment of the current situation in the horticulture industry of the republic		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The FAO national consultant, together with the MAWRPI working group, conducted data analysis and an assessment of the current state of the horticulture sector in the country. The analysis identified key challenges and provided recommendations for solutions. The main findings and conclusions of the analysis were included in the programme submitted to the Ministry.	
Activity 4.3	Prepare Round table reports outlining needs, priorities and a road map		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Together with the MAWRPI working group, the project team developed recommendations and proposals, identified priorities for sustainable fruit production, and created a roadmap for the programme based on stakeholder discussions. These are reflected in the Horticulture Development Programme, which was officially adopted by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic (14 October 2024, No. 633-r).	

Activity 4.4	Assisting the MOA in establishing a nursery database	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	The FAO National Consultant on Horticulture assisted the Ministry in creating a database of fruit nurseries in Kyrgyzstan. The Ministry is working to grant official status to the established Fruit Nurseries. To date, 14 farms have received the official Fruit Nursery status. The data is available online at https://sady.kg , which includes data and analysis materials from the consultant's report.
Activity 4.5	Project Finalization	
	Achieved	Yes
	Comments	The final workshop was conducted on 29 January 2025.

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

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