



In Attendance of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

ICBA Demonstrates Transformative Agricultural Project in Karakalpakstan Funded by ADFD

Funded by Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, this Landmark Global South-South and Triangular Collaboration Focusses on Science, Innovation, and Women Empowerment in Agriculture

Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan; 23 August 2024 – The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture ([ICBA](#)) participated in a ceremony attended by H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to demonstrate its major multi-year project focused on increasing the productivity of degraded and saline areas of Karakalpakstan.

The project “Development of Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in Degraded Areas of Karakalpakstan”, funded by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) and implemented in collaboration with the International Innovation Center for the Aral Sea Basin (IICAS), the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change of Uzbekistan, and other key local ministries and partners, represents a landmark in global cooperation.

His Excellency Aziz Abdukhakimov, Minister of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change of Uzbekistan, commented on the project, saying: " The implementation of this project enables the introduction of advanced technologies and innovative methods aimed at improving water management, increasing soil fertility, and developing agro-aquaculture. This initiative not only enhances agricultural productivity and food security in the region but also promotes long-term sustainability, addresses critical environmental issues such as soil salinization, and strengthens economic development by creating new jobs and supporting local communities".

His Excellency Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), said: “At ADFD, we consider this project to be a catalyst for positive change, as it will enhance food security, build resilience, and tackle climate challenges in the Aral Sea region. By leveraging our expertise in development finance, ICBA’s technical knowledge, Uzbekistan’s agricultural expertise, and IICAS’s research and innovation, we aim to provide customized solutions for the local agricultural community. This collaborative effort will strengthen



Karakalpakstan’s agricultural capacity, promote job creation, and support agribusiness, consequently contributing to the region’s immediate and long-term growth.”

Since its launch in 2022, with \$5.0 million in funding from ADFD, the project has made substantial progress in addressing the severe environmental challenges in Karakalpakstan, primarily caused by the shrinking of the Aral Sea. A notable achievement includes the successful introduction of 25 genotypes of different food and fodder crops at demonstration sites in Nukus, Chimbay, and Muynak, where field trials have shown promising results. The project has also focused on improving irrigation infrastructure across these sites with the installation of advanced systems such as drip irrigation and water storage solutions, greatly enhancing water management.

Additionally, various soil amendments have been introduced to increase soil fertility, contributing to the overall sustainability of agricultural systems in the region. Modern agri-aquaculture systems and locally adopted greenhouses are being developed, further showcasing the innovative approaches the project has embraced. More than 200 scientists, extension workers, and farmers have been trained in different aspects of soil, water, and crop management, ensuring the transfer of knowledge and best practices to local communities.

Dr. Tarifa Al Zaabi, Director General of ICBA, remarked on the project’s significance during the ceremony, stating: “This project exemplifies the collaborative efforts between ICBA, Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), and our partners in Uzbekistan, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change, the Karakalpakstan Agriculture Research Institute (KARI), and the International Innovation Center for the Aral Sea Basin (IICAS). We are committed to driving sustainable agricultural solutions that can transform the lives of local communities and address the pressing environmental challenges of the region.”

As the project progresses, it will open doors to scaling up many innovations and technologies that have been successfully introduced. A cornerstone of this project is its focus on empowering women in agriculture. Through targeted training programs and farmer field schools, women have been equipped with the necessary skills and resources to lead sustainable agricultural practices. This



empowerment enhances their livelihoods and strengthens the overall resilience of their communities, ensuring that the benefits of the project are widely felt.

This project represents a successful model of Global South-South and Triangular Collaboration, involving ICBA, ADFD, and local partners in Uzbekistan. This tripartite cooperation has facilitated the exchange of knowledge and the transfer of innovative agricultural technologies, benefiting Karakalpakstan and offering potential solutions for other regions facing similar challenges.

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About ICBA

Established by the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Development Bank, the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique international not-for-profit applied research-for-development center. The center's approach integrates strategic alliances, technical expertise, and knowledge empowerment to co-create innovative solutions for sustainable livelihoods and food security in saline and arid environments. The center's research is at the nexus of soil, water, crops, and climate to prevent, manage and recover from salinity in agricultural lands. Through this holistic and integrated approach, ICBA strives to make a lasting positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of farming communities, ensuring their resilience and contributing to a more sustainable future for all.

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