

Final Project Review Report

*(to be reviewed and finalized by the Project Board during
the Final Review meeting)*

Project title: The Project for Supporting Self-reliance through Climate- resilient Agriculture in the Aral Sea Region

Project ID: 01001247

Award ID: 1159173 (000141 - Gov. Japan)

Implementing partner: Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Period covered in this report: 01.10.2023 – 30.09.2025

Date of the last Annual Report: 2024

Date of the last Project Board meeting: 25.09.2025

Project Performance

1. Please state the expected Output of the Project, set indicators and corresponding CPD Outcome (as per the project document/AWP):

The Project aims at increasing self-reliance of people in the targeted communities by introducing climate resilient agricultural practices and social infrastructure. The Project uses the Human Security programmatic framework to address multiple human insecurities faced by population of the Aral Sea region. It will use the top-down protection and bottom-up empowerment principles. It will address the food, economic and social security needs of population affected by the Aral Sea disaster, whose resilience is further at risk due to the climate shocks, chronic water deficit and increased food prices due to the ongoing global and regional food price volatility. Relying on UNDP and other partners' experiences, the Project will identify and advance efficient and innovative solutions in agriculture through the use of alternative energy sources, using Japanese methods of product and business development as well as improving access to clean drinking water in remote climate risk communities.

Component 1: Address food and economic security of the vulnerable women and men and increase their self-reliance through promoting climate-resilient innovative agriculture practices at the household/farm levels.

Indicators:

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	BASELIE	ACHIEVED
Output 1 # of households/farms in 50 target communities have implemented improved sustainable agriculture production practices, which	1.1 At least 100 initiatives on installation of new green and energy saving solutions in agro-producing sector and among households	4	104
	1.2 Number of households ensured better access to food and income increase.	9	109
	1.3 Number of households/farms increased the skills and capacity on crop diversification, use of fertilisers and pest control. # households have adopted and replicated improved agricultural practices	6	19

are environmentally sustainable, and address the impact of climate change.	1.4 Capacity building on new innovative solutions in agri-business, product development and marketing based on the principles of “One village one product” (OVOP) and creating value-chain of agroproducts, exporting relevant products to the neighboring countries and Japan in cooperation with JICA Uzbekistan, JICA OVOP Project in Kyrgyz Republic and JETRO).	15	415
	1.5 Number of beneficiaries with the new skills on business techniques of “Kaizen”.	10	410
	1.6 At least one Online and one offline climate related agro information exchange platform in the started districts established.	n/a	2

Component 2: Strengthen adaptive capacities and resilience to climate change in the most suffered communities in Aral Sea region.

Indicators:

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	BASELIE	ACHIEVED
Output 2 At least 15 communities have formulated climate resilient community development plans and implemented priority social infrastructure projects to improve access of the rural population to climate resilient social services, including drinking water and sustainable energy, thereby ensuring the health and food security of the population.	2.1 Number of community plans developed.	15	31
	2.2 Number of priority projects with community inputs identified.	15	31
	2.3 Number of technical design of projects prepared	5	14
	2.4 Number of tenders announced	8	17
	2.5. At least 20,000 rural people improved access to basic social services, including save drinking water and sustainable energy, thereby ensuring the health and food security of the population	20,000	45,388

2

CPD Outcome: By promoting climate-resilient and innovative agricultural practices at household and farm levels, the project enhances food security, increases incomes, and strengthens self-reliance among vulnerable women and men, in line with SDG targets 2.3 and 2.4 on sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices. Capacity-building initiatives on agri-business development, value chains, OVOP, and Kaizen contribute to inclusive economic growth and women's economic empowerment (SDG targets 1.4 and 5.a). Furthermore, the formulation and implementation of climate-resilient community development plans and priority social infrastructure projects improve access to safe drinking water and sustainable energy for rural populations, contributing to SDG targets 6.1, 7.1, and 13.1, while strengthening community-level adaptive capacities and resilience to climate change in the Aral Sea region. All indicators were verified and duly recorded in QUANTUM, with annual targets finalized Contributing to UNDP country programme document (CPD) for Uzbekistan 2021-2025: Output 4.4. Systems innovations advanced for integrated solutions in the Aral Sea region.

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, 2021-2025 that states that “by 2025, innovative, sustainable and age- and gender-responsive climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives in agriculture, health, water, transport, energy production and building/housing/residential infrastructure sectors are designed and implemented at national and regional levels, with a focus on at risk regions, including Aral Sea region
 Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: **GEN 2 with 71 % of women beneficiaries among OVOP/Kaizen participants and 50% community members benefitting from water/electricity access. The project applied a Leave No One Behind approach, reaching 46 women out of 102 supported households (45%), thereby ensuring substantial inclusion of women from vulnerable communities in the Aral Sea region**

a) Was the target met? Yes ☒ No ☐ Partially ☐

b) If no (or partially), please explain why?

2. Implementation

a) *Please, summarize the main achievements during the reporting period of project implementation:*

Component 1:

- Feasibility study of relevant income-generating projects is conducted in Chimbay, Hodjeli, Kegeyli, and Nukus districts. Jointly with partners, review committee on competitive base, selected business projects initiated by youth and women beneficiaries from pilot districts, appropriate technical specifications of the requested equipment identified, open tenders for procuring equipment organized;
- As per decision of review committee **12** initiatives of local farmers and entrepreneurs on processing agricultural products were approved for co-financing which allow to increase their production potential and introduce resource-saving and effective farming practices. Tenders were initiated and currently equipment for **12** initiatives of local farmers and entrepreneurs were delivered and all of them are functioning. **36** people from rural areas are employed at these enterprises;
- **101** households, **2** enterprises and **10** farmers in pilot districts were supported for the establishment of fruit gardens, development of vermicompost, hotbeds, hydroponic systems, bee farming and wood and wool processing workshops. These initiatives created home-based employment and improving food and income security;
- An innovative initiative to create "smart" agriculture aimed at optimizing the use of water resources has been launched in the Zhalpakazhap VCC of the Kegeyli district. In particular, the project provides for the purification of water from a drainage collector for growing fruits and vegetables, while the treated wastewater will be reused for aquaculture, including fish farming and artemia.
- **400** farmers and entrepreneurs of target districts were trained on "OVOP" product development initiatives and "Kaizen" methods of business development through series of trainings by International expert in pilot districts. With support of an International expert and **4** facilitators of the Project **60** producers in the Aral sea region developed more than **70** new local products and started their production (dried fruits, candies, cookies, tea herbs, honey, natural soap etc). That allows to build capacity in the new innovative solutions in agribusiness, product development and marketing based on the Japanese principles of "One Village - One product" (OVOP) and "Kaizen" to create a value chain for agricultural products. "OVOP ARAL" trademark is registered for promoting local products;
- An online platform has been created www.ovop.uz for the development, promotion and marketing of products based on the OVOP principle. Office of the "OVOP Aral" has been

established in the premises of the International Innovation Center for Aral Sea Basin, which will serve as an offline platform for mobilizing local producers;

- Jointly with hired local expert, knowledge are being shared with households on sustainable agricultural production, promoting crop diversification, use of fertilizers and pest control at household level in pilot areas;
- Organic fertilizer Fujimin is being tested in farms and household yards in the Aral Sea region. Production experiments with use of Fujimin in **14** types of agricultural crops at sites in Chimbay, Hodjeli, Kegeyli, and Nukus districts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan have yielded good results.

Component 2:

- Needs of **16** remote communities are identified in the pilot districts through organization of community mobilization, ensuring community participatory approach of **448** residents of local communities and **16** CDPs (community development plan) on social infrastructure projects such as access to clean drinking water, sustainable electricity supply, sewage system, improvement of education and better health services were developed and materialized;
- **7,296** people (**3,610** women) in **12** communities of **4** pilot districts have access to stable electricity supply due to newly supplied **12** sets of electric transformers with a capacity of 250 kVA;
- **7,702** residents (**4,026** women) in **4** communities of the pilot districts received access to clean drinking water;
- **6,212** residents (**3,171** women) in **2** communities of the pilot districts improved access to better education and health services;
- Japanese wastewater treatment technology was introduced through installation of a decentralized wastewater treatment system "Johkasou" with a capacity of 10, 15 and 20 m3/day in **3** socially significant facilities in the target districts, such as: Rehabilitation and Prosthetics Center for the Disabled of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Preschool Educational Facility No. 13 of the Nukus district and State School for Children with Scoliosis No. 6 under the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

3. Issues

a) Please specify the issues and challenges that were raised during the reporting period to the attention of the Project Board. Describe the steps taken to solve those (Management response in QUANTUM).

Concerns were raised regarding economic feasibility of future application of "Fujimin" technology by farmers in Uzbekistan. Therefore, "Fujimin" technology was applied on several types of crops and analysis presented good results after testing this technology. Detailed report was developed after all tests had been completed.

4. Project risks

a) Please report on any changes with regard to the raised risks within the project cycle (e.g. risk occurred; no change and etc.). Specify the responses taken for each of those.

No changes were observed with regard to the risks identified during the project cycle. The overall risk categorization remained Low, and no risks materialized during the reporting period. All identified risks and corresponding mitigation measures were regularly monitored. The Risk Log and related treatments have been updated and formally closed in QUANTUM

5. Lessons learned and follow-up steps (if applicable)

a) Please provide the lessons learned and further steps after the project's closure.

Lessons learned:

- Inclusive and participatory project selection enhances ownership: The competitive selection of women- and youth-led business initiatives built strong local ownership and accountability, ensuring high motivation and sustainability of results.
- Integrated capacity development is critical: Combining technical (climate-smart agriculture, irrigation, composting) and managerial (Kaizen, OVOP) trainings proved effective in improving productivity, innovation, and marketing skills.
- Local innovation fosters sustainability: The pilot "smart agriculture" initiative and introduction of organic fertilizer "Fujimin" demonstrated the community's openness to adopting new technologies when technical support is available.
- Participatory planning builds trust and inclusion: The community-driven process in developing CDPs strengthened local governance, increased transparency, and improved prioritization of real needs.
- Infrastructure investments deliver multiple benefits: Access to clean water and stable electricity directly improved household well-being, reduced women's workload, and contributed to food security and health outcomes.
- Visibility of donor contribution encourages replication: Demonstrations of Japanese technology ("Johkasou") created strong community interest and government willingness to scale up such systems.

Follow-up steps:

- Expand the "smart agriculture" model and the use of "Fujimin" organic fertilizer to additional districts, documenting results for replication.
- Strengthen business incubation and mentoring for OVOP producers, focusing on quality certification, packaging, and access to national and regional markets.
- Continue training of trainers (ToT) programmes to sustain local expertise in Kaizen and OVOP methodologies.
- Institutionalize the Community Development Plan (CDP) methodology in district planning frameworks and integrate identified priorities into local budgets.
- Strengthen operation and maintenance (O&M) systems for newly installed water and energy infrastructure through local user committees.
- Expand the introduction of "Johkasou" decentralized wastewater systems in other social institutions with Japanese cooperation support.
- Develop a Phase II proposal focusing on upscaling successful pilots in climate-resilient agriculture, water management, and OVOP entrepreneurship.
- Strengthen partnerships with the Government of Japan for co-financing and technology transfer.
- Continue documenting and sharing lessons within the UNDP country office and regional networks to inform broader programming on resilience and sustainable livelihoods.

6. Transfer of Assets or other related matter

a) Please state on any past or future transfer of assets made within the project cycle (Attach list of equipment, cooperation frameworks with beneficiaries, etc.)

List of transferred assets:

- 1 set of sunflower oil production equipment;
- 1 set of fish feed production equipment;
- 1 set of bakery production equipment;
- 1 set of corn puff production equipment;
- 1 set of tomato paste production equipment;
- 1 set of smoked meat and fish production equipment;
- 1 set of artificial queen bee insemination equipment;
- 1 set of cotton processing equipment;
- 1 set of cotton processing and cotton socks and gloves production equipment;
- 1 set of liquid biohumus production equipment;
- 1 set of honey processing equipment;
- 1 set of chicken meat processing equipment;

- Set of glass jars for "One Village One Product" initiatives;
- 27 sets of motocultivators;
- 24 sets of beehives with beekeeping tools;
- 26 sets of hotbeds with drip irrigation;
- 11 sets of fruit seedlings with drip irrigation;
- 2 sets of incubators;
- 10 sets of mini hydroponic systems;
- 3 sets of specialized sites for producing vermicompost (biohumus);
- 1 set of mini mower;
- 1 set of instrument for vehicle repair;
- 2 sets of sewing machine;
- 2 sets of water pumps;
- 1 set of wood processing equipment;
- 2 sets of mini borehole machine;
- 1 set of wool processing machine;
- 1 set of equipment for production of elbows and fittings for house roofing;
- 1 set of equipment (Smart Agriculture practices, solar panels off grid -15 kwt, Osmosis system 1m3 per hour, Fruit garden with drip irrigation, Artificial ponds with incaulation of artemia and fish;
- 12 sets of electric transformers with a capacity of 250 kVA;
- Reconstruction of water desalination plant with the installation of an additional water desalination equipment with a capacity of 12 m3/hour and construction of water supply networks (1 km) in the community "Pashenttau" of the Chimbay district;
- Reconstruction of water desalination plant with the installation of water desalination equipment with a capacity of 12 m3/hour and construction of water supply networks (1 km) in the community "Altimshak" of the Kegeyli district;
- Reconstruction of water distribution plant with the installation of water pump equipment with a capacity of 108 m3/hour and construction of water supply networks (0,6 km) in the community "Arbashi" of the Nukus district;
- Reconstruction of water distribution plant with the installation of water pump equipment with a capacity of 48 m3/hour and construction of water supply networks (5 km) in the community "Amudarya" of the Khodjeyli district;
- Reconstruction of the Family Medical Facility "Taza baz" in the community "Kulab" of the Khodjeyli district;
- Major renovation of Branch of the Secondary School No.38 in the community "Kokozek" of the Kegeyli district;
- Installation of a decentralized wastewater treatment system using "Johkasou" technology with a capacity of 20 m3/day in the Rehabilitation and Prosthetics Center for the Disabled of the Republic of Karakalpakstan;
- Installation of a decentralized wastewater treatment system using "Johkasou" technology with a capacity of 10 m3/day in Preschool Educational Facility No. 13 of the Nukus district;
- Installation of a decentralized wastewater treatment system using "Johkasou" technology with a capacity of 15 m3/day in the State School for Children with Scoliosis No. 6 under the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

7. Financial management

Total approved budget: USD 2,000,000*

Total expenditure (broken down by donor): USD 1,881,038.64

Delivery rate: 100%

Prepared by: Alisher Utemisov, Project Manager

A. Alisher

Cleared by: Bakhadur Paluanliyazov, Head of ECA Cluster

DocuSigned by:

Bakhadur Paluanliyazov

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Endorsed by the Project Board:

[Signature]

Implementing Partner (National Project Coordinator):
Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan, Deputy Chairman

Signed by:

[Signature]

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UNDP (RR/DRR)

Checklist to be completed by the Programme focal point:

- ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** Annual targets reporting is finalized in QUANTUM
- ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** Risk/issue/monitoring logs are updated in QUANTUM by Project Manager and management response is updated by Programme Officer / programme focal point
- ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** Transfer of Assets is made
- ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** signed CDR for each implementation year is available.
- ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** Project files are handed over by the PM and all other pending issues are settled by the PM prior to the operational closure.
- ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** Project can be operationally closed.

If for some boxes, "No" was checked, please provide justification:

Signed by:

DocuSigned by:

Pishenbay Smirbekov

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Programme focal point

Cleared by:

DocuSigned by:

Mukhabbat Turkmenova

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Programme Management Specialist/ M&E Associate

* Project received actual amount of \$ 1,881,038.64 USD due to the change of exchange rate JPY/USD