

EU Supports Programmes Aimed at Developing Sustainable Organic Agriculture in RA



“We are confident that when the programme is complete the 46 independent farmers we have established, trained and helped are cemented enough in their knowledge, skills, and environment to be able to carry on without our immediate support” – David Muckenhuber, Project Team Leader, Organic Agriculture Support Initiative (OASI), ADA.

Context

EU supports programmes, such as Organic Agriculture Support Initiative (OASI), contributing to the sustainable development of Armenia’s agriculture.

Facts & Figures

Implementing organisations in Armenia: Austrian Development Agency (ADA)

CRIS number: ENPI/2015359-050

Budget: € 2 800 000

August 2017

Duration: 36 months | September 2015 – August 2018

Location: All marzes / regions | Republic of Armenia

Objectives

- Develop policy and legal framework for organic agriculture;
- Achieve higher efficiency of relevant private and public institutions;
- Implement an organic agriculture farm/enterprise grant scheme;
- Position Armenian organic products on local and international markets.

Results

- Assisted the Ministry of Agriculture with the revision of the Law on organic agriculture and other policy and regulatory documents and their harmonisation with international regulations;
- Supported educational institutions in developing curricula for organic agriculture;
- Organised trainings on organic agriculture for public and private extension services;
- Provided sub-grants to facilitate successful transition from conventional farming to organic agriculture;
- Rendered direct marketing assistance (labels, brands, packaging etc.) to **12** farmers' organisations, co-operatives and processing units;
- Facilitated participation at national and international organic food/trade fairs;
- Trained experts in certification institutions on specific requirements to enhance certification qualifications;
- Designed and implemented an awareness raising campaign.

Testimony

“Victoria” raspberry producer’s group is the beneficiary of OASI, and is part of the project that develops Organic Raspberry Production in Syunik. It received a grant from OASI project. The main purpose of this project is to support nine raspberry producers of “Victoria” in the switch to organic agriculture and to increase their income, as well as to become certified organic. The project has a measurable economic impact both for their families and for the community overall. The women from “Victoria” group have already started cooperating with other women raspberry producers from surrounding villages such as Bnunis, Tasik, Brnakot and Tolors.

It all started when Sonik Arustamyan, one of the founders of “Victoria Raspberry Group,” and her friends found out that OASI project was starting training sessions and

the women applied. “We were apprehensive a bit in the beginning, but once there, we simply got together, explained our idea to find not just a job but an opportunity to independently earn money doing what we have always done with love” Sonik said. “We were very surprised to be nominated to take part in marketing, brand building, and selling trainings, as well as organic production and raspberry cultivation seminars run by the OASI.”

Today after hard work, commitment and the EU support, they are a group of independent raspberry producers supported by a strong network of other raspberry producers in the region and Armenia, with skills to sell their brand “Victoria” to local, regional, and international sellers. The group is committed to developing the “Victoria” brand to achieve an international recognition as the best raspberry products certified organic.