Towards a More Inclusive and Resilient Horticulture Sector for Smallholder Farmers in Jordan

#JordanHortiFuture

CONTEXT

4% Agriculture contribution to Jordan's GDP

25% Of poor households rely on agriculture for income

Jordan is the world's third most water insecure country

40% increase in national water consumption since the start of the Syrian conflict

IMPACT
(Targets)

- Smallholder farmers (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises horticulture farmers)

- local organizations and cooperatives, extension and service providers, input suppliers, SME horticulture farms and agri-businesses, financial institutions, and eco-tourism outfits.

REACH
Balqa, Irbid, Ajloun

Donors

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands
€ 7,400,000

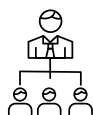January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2023

PROGRAM BRIEF

The Horticulture Program aims to improve the income opportunities and longer-term resilience of smallholder farmers in Balqa, Irbid, Ajloun, and Jordan Valley in Jordan. The project will hold a series of complementary interventions to strengthen the broader horticulture sector across the whole value chain with the inclusiveness of women, youth, and refugees in the horticulture and agribusiness-related sectors. The Mercy Corps-led consortium, consisting of Dutch partners Wageningen University & Research (WUR), Advance Consulting, and Agriterra will bring years of complementary experience working on strengthening the horticulture sector in Jordan and globally.

Building off ongoing efforts supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the program will conduct activities on three levels: directly supporting smallholder farmers to improve their production of high-quality crops and business practices to effectively increase their profit and to strengthen their role within the horticulture value chain. Supporting the broader value chain to improve efficiencies and overall performance and ensure there is a strong market to receive crops from the farmers. And supporting the various sector organizations including the Government of Jordan (GoJ) entities and other horticulture sector players to become effective facilitators and supporters of a thriving and sustainable horticulture sector, while simultaneously promoting private sector-led sector development.

INTERVENTIONS

Increasing productivity and quality of smallholder farm horticulture activities
Mercy Corps will help farmers integrate best practices for cultivation and post-harvest by helping source improved inputs (e.g. seeds and fertilizers), incorporate climate-smart farming practices, and harness appropriate post-harvest management techniques and equipment.

Also, introducing small farm-appropriate technologies, and providing training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) both directly and via linkages to farmer-to-farmer training programs, all of which will increase the production of high value/low water usage crops and ultimately diversify farmer income streams.

Enhancing smallholder farmers skills to use improved business practices
Mercy Corps will provide training courses on marketing, business development, savings and loans management, and links to mentors. In addition, providing concrete business support in the form of cost-sharing grants for any new on or off-farm agri-business channels the farmers wish to pursue, including in eco-tourism, and increased access to finance in partnership with other agriculture stakeholders.

Improving horticulture value chain performance and market linkages for smallholder farms
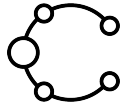
Mercy Corps will support farmers' competitiveness and access to quality inputs and services across the value chain and strengthen demand for these improved products and linkages to get these products to local and international markets, using the following approaches:

- The Mercy Corps-led consortium will provide training courses to service providers on how best to engage with smallholder farmers and broader risk-reducing support to develop the products and services smallholder farmers need most.
- Involve the National Agricultural Research Center (NARC) and other agricultural organizations to help provide farmers with climate-related information for planning of agricultural activities, improve early warning systems on topics such as frost and precipitation, and support improved monitoring and communication of emerging diseases done by agricultural institutions.

Improve market linkages between smallholder farmers, extension services, and business support

Strengthening market linkages by technology-enabled platforms will allow for faster and improved communicstionsbetween extension services, business support, consumers, and farmers. This will allow farmers to respond more immediately to market information and provide the information needed by customers.

The project will also focus on improved production planning, aggregation, and marketing of smallholder farmer products to local markets to avoid periods of oversupply of popular products.

Improving the enabling and supporting environment of the Horticultural Sector for smallholder farmers

Improve the broader enabling environment of the horticulture sector by strengthening coordination among donors, implementers, government, and the agriculture sector (private sector) - including Dutch initiatives. As well as strengthening organizational capacity and service delivery by farmers organizations, and providing evidence-based information to improve performance across the horticulture sector, the role of the Government of Jordan, its agencies and other stakeholders as enablers of this process.

Increased sector inclusiveness to include the participation of youth, women, and refugees in the horticulture sector

Building strong partnerships with other programs in the country that are best suited to address barriers inhibiting the participation of youth, women, and refugees in the horticulture sector. Partnerships will cover rural women's associations and national organizations like the Specific Union of Farmer Women.

MERCY CORPS