Introduction of Good Agricultural Practices within the Framework of the Agrodev Project

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Annotation: Agriculture is one of the dominant sectors of the economy of Uzbekistan and is developing intensively. The last three to four years can be called a period of unprecedented comprehensive reforms in the agricultural sector, including the introduction of market mechanisms, advanced technologies in the agricultural sector and the transition to a cluster production system. One of the priority areas of the "Strategy of Action for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan", adopted at the beginning of 2017, is the modernization and intensive development of agriculture. On October 23, 2019, the "Development Strategy for Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030" was adopted. The priority areas for the implementation of the Strategy are the implementation of state policy in the field of food security, ensuring food safety and improving consumer demand, and producing food products in the required volume.

The Government of Uzbekistan has developed a Strategy for the innovative development of the agricultural education system until 2030. Higher agricultural education is provided at higher educational institutions in Tashkent and Samarkand, including the Samarkand Institute of Veterinary Medicine - under the State Committee for Veterinary Medicine and Livestock Development. They provide study programs in agriculture and water management at bachelor's and master's levels, as well as related postgraduate education. According to the Strategy, it is planned to organize joint educational programs with 30 foreign universities. It is expected that the new degrees will be developed using the principles of the Bologna Process. In addition, measures will be taken to include universities of the agricultural education system in the list of 1000 prestigious universities in the world (QS rating system). Starting from the 2020/2021 academic year, a credit-module training system is being introduced in all areas of bachelor's and master's training in this area.

Goals and objectives of the project. In order to identify the preconditions and challenges that need to be taken into account when developing new teaching modules for agriculture-related curricula, an analysis was carried out to understand resource requirements at four universities in Central Asia, two in Kyrgyzstan and two in Uzbekistan. , knowledge and competencies, external factors that must be taken into account when developing new content of modernized educational programs aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of graduates at the bachelor's and master's levels. Modernized content of higher education is necessary for the development of such national agri-food production systems, where farms/enterprises will apply internationally recognized good agricultural practices (GAP), principles and approaches of sustainable agribusiness management, thereby increasing the efficiency and competitiveness of the agro-industrial complex (primary production and Preliminary processing). All of the above will support business development, thereby providing residents with high-quality and safe food products and a clean environment and indirectly contribute to regional and rural development.

The project "Improving the content of higher education aimed at supporting industries that ensure the sustainable production of quality agricultural products" (AgroDev), No. 619039-EPP-1-2020-1-LV-EPPKA2 -CBHE-JP, funded by the EU Erasmus + program included main: Modernization of higher education related to agro-industry, followed by the implementation and effective management of sustainable agri-food production systems in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. At the same time, the following problems were solved:

1. Modernize educational programs on agri-food production at 4 universities in Central Asia.

2. Promote the availability of qualified specialists in the agri-food industry.

3. Develop the potential of academic staff.

4. Improve the learning environment.

5. Strengthen ties between universities and agri-food producers.

6. Expand networking between higher education institutions in Central Asia and the EU: Latvian University of Life Sciences and Technology (Latvia), Krakow Agricultural University (Poland), Linneus University (Sweden).

Project results. Modernized programs in the subjects: Agricultural production; Food storage and processing; Food quality and safety management; Production of fruits and vegetables; Agricultural Policy and Food Security; Rural Investments; Agribusiness management; Innovation in agribusiness; Smart agriculture, etc. Storage of agricultural products; Fundamentals of metrology, standardization and certification. Assessment of the quality of agricultural products; Packaging of agricultural products. Conducting a training seminar on the credit-modular education system and pedagogical skills - Sweden; Modernization of subject curricula and pilot classes on Global Gap - Poland; Global Gap certification training seminar – Sweden; Organic farming and agrotourism – Latvia; Pilot classes in modernized subjects - all European universities; Joint Field seminars with European partners on farms in the Samarkand region.

The final results of the project will be used in the educational process at universities in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, which will make it possible to make a worthy contribution to the training of qualified, in-demand specialists in the domestic and foreign labor markets.

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