



المركز الدولي للزراعة الملحية
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR
BIOSALINE AGRICULTURE



صندوق أبوظبي للتنمية
ABU DHABI FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT

Abu Dhabi Fund for Development Inaugurates Agricultural Systems Development Project in Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan

- *This international collaboration reflects a practical model of Triangular South–South Cooperation in developing sustainable agricultural production systems.*

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, September 23rd 2025: The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) inaugurated the Agricultural Production Systems Development Project in Karakalpakstan – Uzbekistan during a high-level field visit to the project sites.

The project, titled “Development of Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in Degraded Areas of Karakalpakstan,” is funded by ADFD and implemented in collaboration with the Government of Uzbekistan – represented by the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection, and Climate Change, and the Ministry of Agriculture – the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), the International Innovation Center for the Aral Sea Basin (IICAS), and the Karakalpakstan Agricultural Research Institute (KARI).

The visit aimed to review progress and assess advancements achieved under this joint initiative, which seeks to restore agricultural productivity and strengthen resilience in arid and saline environments of the Aral Sea region.

The announcement was made during an official ceremony attended by H.E. Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD); H.E. Orinbayev Amanbay Tieubayevich, Chairman of the Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; H.E. Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA); H.E. Xabibullaev Baxitjan Sagidullaevich, Director of the International Innovation Center for the Aral Sea Basin; and H.E. Dr. Bekmurat Turdishev, Director General, Karakalpakstan Agriculture Research Institute (KARI), along with a delegation from ADFD, scientists from the partner institutions, farmers, and other stakeholders.

Launched in 2022 with a total investment of AED 18.7 million (USD 5 million) from Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), this landmark project is set to transform the agricultural landscape of Karakalpakstan. It introduces integrated agricultural systems to raise productivity, support local communities, and address the challenges of drought, desertification, and land degradation caused by the Aral Sea crisis.



المركز الدولي للزراعة الملحية
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR
BIOSALINE AGRICULTURE



صندوق أبوظبي للتنمية
ABU DHABI FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT

The project focuses on introducing drought-, heat-, and salt-tolerant crops, applying advanced water and soil management systems, and developing innovative agricultural models to enhance food security and support sustainable livelihoods. It also involves testing more than 20 resilient crop types under extreme climatic conditions across three model sites.

In addition, the project includes the development of modern irrigation and drainage infrastructure, cost-effective greenhouses, seed propagation units, and an integrated agri-aquaculture system that combines salt-tolerant crops with fish production to maximize resource efficiency. A core component of the project is capacity building, with training provided for nearly 2,000 specialists and farmers on advanced practices and technologies to ensure optimal results and long-term sustainability for this vital sector.

Regarding the inauguration, **His Excellency Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi said:** “This project reflects the vision of our wise leadership and our shared commitment to advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals of strengthening food security worldwide. It reinforces the Fund’s strategic approach to implementing innovative solutions, fostering impactful partnerships and enabling knowledge exchange between nations. Through such projects, we aim to empower communities to overcome environmental challenges, adapt to climate realities, and build stronger, more self-reliant economies.

His Excellency Al Suwaidi added: “Beyond the project’s agricultural focus, the initiative also contributes to broader economic resilience, unlocking opportunities that align with Uzbekistan’s national development agenda and long-term vision for an inclusive, sustainable future. Our collaboration with the Republic of Uzbekistan in this pioneering project underscores ADFD’s dedication to generating measurable, lasting impact that benefits both current and future generations.”

Her Excellency Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture said: "We are proud of our partnership with Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, through which we exemplify a scientific and practical model that transforms challenges into opportunities and establishes a successful example of strategic investment. In Uzbekistan, this collaboration has enabled the testing of more than twenty varieties of crops tolerant to salinity and drought, with significant nutritional value. It has also led to the development of the country’s first integrated system that combines vegetable cultivation, algae cultivation, and aquaculture, while ensuring the optimal use of water resources. The project further included awareness and training programs to build farmers’ capacities in



المركز الدولي للزراعة الملحية
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR
BIOSALINE AGRICULTURE



صندوق أبوظبي للتنمية
ABU DHABI FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT

production and to promote the sustainability of agricultural practices suited to arid and saline environments”

Her Excellency Dr. Alzaabi added, “The true value of the project lies not only in land reclamation or the introduction of new technologies, but also in strengthening the resilience of farming communities and opening new horizons for achieving sustainable food and water security across the Global South.”

His Excellency **Xabibullaev Baxitjan Sagidullaevich, Director of the International Innovation Center for the Aral Sea Basin** stated that today’s meeting symbolizes confidence, cooperation, and solidarity. Since 2019, the Center and ICBA have jointly implemented scientific and practical projects, including the sustainable agriculture initiative in Karakalpakstan, supported by the Abu Dhabi Development Fund and other partners. This project created experimental fields, tested salt-tolerant crops and technologies, benefited over a thousand farmers, and was honored with the **Energy Globe Award 2024**.

His Excellency Sagidullaevich also noted that a new pilot on Integrated Agri-Aquaculture Systems is now being launched to combine crop and fish farming with efficient water use. These efforts strengthen food security, support climate change adaptation, and improve livelihoods in the Aral Sea region, while highlighting Uzbekistan’s active role in addressing global environmental challenges. The Center expressed sincere gratitude to international partners for their continued support.

This project represents a major milestone for Karakalpakstan, shifting the region from the challenges of environmental degradation to a future of sustainable agriculture through improved soil quality, optimized water utilization, and the generation of new livelihoods. By integrating scientific innovation with community empowerment, it provides a forward-looking model that balances human needs with environmental sustainability, laying the foundation for a more resilient and prosperous future for generations to come. As the international community seeks scalable pathways to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, this initiative stands out as a practical model of triangular South–South cooperation.

ENDS