



**Funded by Abu Dhabi Fund for Development and delivered in collaboration
with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Agriculture**

ICBA Concludes Knowledge Exchange Programme Linking Dubai Training with Field Application in Uzbekistan

The centre's first programme of its kind was delivered in two phases to build expertise in integrated aqua-agriculture systems and support livelihoods in Karakalpakstan

Nukus, Uzbekistan, 11 October 2026: The International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) has concluded its first-of-its-kind Knowledge and Training Exchange Program for Agricultural Sustainability, connecting specialised training in Dubai with field application in Nukus, Uzbekistan. Funded by Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) and delivered in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the programme aimed to build local expertise in operating integrated production systems and adapting them to the needs of areas affected by salinity, water scarcity and land degradation.

The programme forms part of the scale-up phase of the ADFD-funded project, "Development of Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in Degraded Areas of Karakalpakstan". The project aims to improve smallholder farmers' livelihoods and promote more sustainable and diversified agricultural production, alongside capacity development, value chain development and improved market access.

Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, said: "We want the knowledge participants acquire to translate into the practical ability to implement agricultural solutions and adapt them to their



communities' needs. This is why the programme was designed to link training in Dubai with field application in Uzbekistan, giving local professionals the expertise needed to expand the use of integrated production systems. With funding from Abu Dhabi Fund for Development and in collaboration with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Agriculture, we are working to ensure that this expertise contributes to the development of viable agricultural enterprises that support smallholder farmers' livelihoods in areas affected by salinity, water scarcity and land degradation."

The programme comprised two complementary phases. The first took place at ICBA's headquarters in Dubai from 21 to 23 September and was designed to train ten specialists from Uzbekistan in the principles, design and operation of integrated aqua-agriculture systems. Practical training introduced participants to the scientific and technical aspects of these systems, preparing them to apply the knowledge in their local context.

The second phase took place in Nukus on 5 and 6 October, with 16 participants attending laboratory sessions and field activities focused on integrated systems combining aquaculture, crop production and spirulina cultivation. Training covered system operation, as well as spirulina cultivation, harvesting and drying, with an emphasis on implementation requirements and adaptation to local conditions.

This progression from specialised training to field practice connects scientific knowledge with operational requirements, building local expertise to manage these systems and adapt them to available resources and production needs. Developing this expertise is essential to sustaining the use of agricultural solutions and expanding their adoption in areas facing environmental and agricultural production challenges.



The programme complements the Farmers' and Agro-Entrepreneurs Accelerator in Karakalpakstan, which supports product and value chain development and strengthens market access. Combining technical training with business skills helps equip farmers and agro-entrepreneurs to translate agricultural solutions into viable enterprises and strengthens opportunities to attract investment for expansion.

The programme reflects ICBA's commitment to connecting scientific research with capacity development and practical application, in collaboration with national institutions and development partners, to support sustainable agriculture and improve livelihoods in communities affected by salinity, water scarcity and land degradation.

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About ICBA

Established by the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Development Bank, the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) is a unique international not-for-profit applied research-for-development center. The center's approach integrates strategic alliances, technical expertise, and knowledge empowerment to co-create innovative solutions for sustainable livelihoods and food security in saline and arid environments. The center's research is at the nexus of soil, water, crops, and climate to prevent, manage and recover from salinity in agricultural lands. Through this holistic and integrated approach, ICBA strives to make a lasting positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of farming communities, ensuring their resilience and contributing to a more sustainable future for all.

www.biosaline.org

About Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD)

Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) is one of the UAE's leading development and economic institutions. Established in 1971 under the visionary leadership of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Fund was founded on a forward-looking belief in the importance of supporting sustainable development in developing countries. ADFD provides concessional loans and managing government grants to finance development projects across key sectors that drive economic and social growth. The Fund also



plays a pivotal role in stimulating investment, supporting the national private sector, and enhancing the global presence of UAE exports through strategic partnerships spanning more than 100 countries, thereby contributing to the national economy and delivering sustainable development impact.

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