

SUPPORTED BY ABU DHABI FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT

ICBA and Uzbekistan's Agency for Innovative Development Launch Farmers' and Agro-Entrepreneurs Accelerator in Karakalpakstan

One-month intensive program will support 200 farmers and agro-entrepreneurs in developing value-added products and strengthening market access

Nukus, Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan, 11 August 2026 – The [International Center for Biosaline Agriculture](#) (ICBA), with support from Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) and in collaboration with the Agency for Innovative Development under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, has launched the Farmers' and Agro-Entrepreneurs Accelerator in Nukus. The one-month program is being implemented under the ADFD-funded project "Development of Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in Degraded Areas of Karakalpakstan".

The program, delivered at Youth Technopark in Nukus, will support 200 farmers and agro-entrepreneurs in developing value-added products and strengthening their capabilities in agribusiness management and market access with particular focus on attracting women and young people.

His Excellency Mohamed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of ADFD, said: "The launch of this program reflects the Fund's commitment to maximizing the development impact of its projects by empowering local communities and strengthening their capacity to achieve sustainable economic growth. Our collaboration with the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture and the Agency for Innovative Development demonstrates the importance of partnerships that bring together development finance, scientific expertise and local knowledge. The program aims to support farmers and agro-entrepreneurs in Karakalpakstan develop value-added products and strengthen their access to markets, supporting the sustainability of the agricultural sector and the local economy."

Dr. Tarifa Alzaabi, Director General of the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture, said: "This program builds on the progress achieved with our partners in Karakalpakstan and marks an important step

towards translating advances in agricultural production into sustainable economic opportunities. Our work is guided by an integrated approach that covers the entire agricultural value chain, from production and post-harvest management to processing, marketing and delivery to consumers.”

Dr. Alzaabi added: “Through the program, we are drawing on ICBA’s scientific and applied expertise to equip 200 farmers and agro-entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills needed to develop high-quality products that meet market requirements. We look forward to seeing participants translate this knowledge into value-added products and scalable enterprises, strengthening their competitiveness and contributing to a more sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural sector in Karakalpakstan.”

Dr. Asror Norov, Acting Director of the Agency for Innovative Development, said: “The program provides a practical pathway that brings together scientific knowledge, local experience and market requirements. Participants will be able to develop their ideas and products, strengthen their business management and marketing capabilities, and build stronger links with stakeholders across agricultural value chains.”

Dr. Norov added: “Our collaboration with ICBA represents an important step in advancing agricultural innovation in Karakalpakstan and drawing on its scientific and applied expertise in agriculture in arid and saline environments. The program will also help expand the participation of women and young people in developing sustainable agribusinesses across the region.”

The program comprises 16 training modules, spanning across four weeks, covering product and value chain development, post-harvest management, agro-processing, food safety and quality standards, packaging and labelling, intellectual property, business planning, financial modelling, branding and market access.

Integrating technical training, practical guidance and business concept development, the program will help participants transform crops and primary agricultural commodities into market-ready products. Participants will also gain an understanding of quality, registration and pricing requirements, sales channels and opportunities for expansion.

The programme builds on the results of the ADFD-funded project in Karakalpakstan, which has supported the adoption of crops adapted to challenging environmental conditions, including sorghum, millet and improved fodder varieties, while advancing sustainable crop, soil and water management practices.

The program's success will be measured against several indicators, including participant engagement, the quality of the products and business concepts developed, their market readiness, and their potential to generate additional value across the agricultural value chain.

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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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