

Activities, Development Prospects & Challenges

The Kyrgyz Association of Forest and Land Users [AFLU] was established in 2010 by the initiative of a constitutive group composed from juridical bodies, private entrepreneurs, social organizations and farmers from different region of the country. The main objective of the association is the creation of resilient conditions for sustainable management and development of agriculture, forestry and land use in Kyrgyzstan. Currently, AFLU count more than 8000 members, coordinated by regional branches sited in all administrative districts of the country. Through these structures, AFLU is raising crucial and challenging subjects, proposing alternative solutions and realizing relevant actions responding to the needs and expectations of the members and other stakeholders.



Association head office in Bishkek

Activities

Despite its young course of action, the association revealed encouraging progress from institutional, organizational and technical point of view. This will certainly lead to strengthen its status as a potential member-oriented organization and play active role in the development of agricultural and forestry sector in Kyrgyzstan.

The action principle of the association is based on livelihood development in the rural zones. To contribute to such challenge, the association is not only carrying out targeted activities relevant for the members, but also promoting actions related to sustainable use of the existing resources, through disseminating useful knowledge and practices that would improve socioeconomic conditions and protect the living environment of the rural communities.

The following activities represent the main axis on which the association built up its action strategy:

- **Training:** The association is regularly organizing targeted instructive and demonstrative training sessions, commonly in field conditions (*field days*). The aim is to improve practical capacity of the target groups and encourage them to put in practice similar actions in their farming activities. Most of the training activities are demand-driven and related to agriculture value chain, agroforestry, horticulture, efficient use of water, husbandry and veterinary issues.



Training (Field Day) on horticulture

- **Field activities:** The association is promoting useful initiatives and implementing practical activities having demonstrative and socioeconomic purposes. The subjects are relevant for the target groups (members and rural communities) and focus on good agricultural practices and sustainable forest management.



Training (Field Day) on Drip irrigation



Forest & land use mapping activities



Field activities with members

Development prospects

To enhance the association's potential and guide it towards sustainability, it is necessary to promote the achieved results through further institutional, organizational and technical development. In this perspective, the association put emphasis on the following 5 pillars:

1. **Improve the management system and develop the association as “service provider” for the members.** This requires the improvement of the work and coordination of institutional constituents of the association and enhancement of their joint action (*Board, executive, regional and local structures, members, etc.*). In addition, the association will continue to play active role in identifying, analyzing and promoting actual subjects, related to agricultural and forestry governance in Kyrgyzstan that are relevant for the members and other stakeholders.
2. **Technical Development.** The demonstration and dissemination of useful and updated information and practices related to agriculture and forestry are among the priorities in the association's development program. Actually, the association owns 3 sites in different regions of the country, i.e.: **Bishkek** (8 ha of agriculture land + several productive facilities), **Djalal-Abad** (0.7 ha + big storage/processing facilities) and **Issyk-Kul** (7.5 ha of agriculture land and big storage/processing facilities). Some “basic improvements” have been already undertaken on the sites and the aim now is to develop them as substantial “Demonstration and Training Farms”.



Demonstration site in Bishkek



*Demonstration site in Djalal-Abad:
Big storage facility and small processing
unit for walnut oil*

3. **Income Generating/Market oriented activities.** The management staff and the members are very concerned by the economic sustainability of the association. Being aware of the difficulties and challenges facing the organization, they are persistently addressing this predominant issue in their regular consultations. The aim is to keep the association exploring, identifying and diversifying sources of incomes/funding in order to meet its operating needs, deliver its core services and respond to members' requirements and expectations.

In this perspective, the association is actively working to set up favorable organizational and practical conditions for developing income generating/market oriented activities, notably by promoting the productive potential of the members and other local farmers.



The use of association's Brand Names and active involvement of the association in the promotion of the certification of management system, agriculture and forest products will certainly promote and offer added value for local-grown products!



Furthermore, the association is dynamically exploring possibilities to setup “win-win partnership” with local and international organizations through the promotion of services and products that represent an interest for the development of agriculture and forestry sector in Kyrgyzstan.

The case of cooperation with the Norwegian breeding company GENO for the promotion of “Norwegian Red Cow” in Kyrgyzstan is a concrete productive and promising example.



The Association is the formal Distributor of Norwegian Red Cow Semen in Kyrgyzstan

4. Inclusive training program

The association will continue the training activities aiming at improving managerial, technical and practical skills of the association's staff. This is fundamental to respond to association's growing challenges such as effective management, governance and reforms occurring in the field of agriculture and forestry.

The other priority aspect of the training program is related to the promotion of locally-grown products through demonstrating and proposing appropriate solutions related to agriculture value chain (*i.e.: production, harvesting, cleaning and storage, processing and marketing*). The aim is to strengthen awareness and improve practices of the members and farmers, and accompany them in carrying out useful actions that could develop their farming activities.

In view of that, an inclusive program will be developed on a basis of “training-need assessment” at different levels (central, regional, and local). This will include “field sessions/field days” in which concrete examples of best practices adaptable for the local context will be demonstrated to the members and other target groups.

To address actual training needs, the association is looking to establish strategic partnership with local and international organizations and training providers. Such partnership is needed to avoid duplication and identify common areas of interest for the benefit of the local stakeholders.

5. Promotion of the principles of rural development, green economy and green growth

Any facet of Rural Development, Green Economy or Green Growth must be considered with particular reference to agriculture, forestry and land use, since they've been and still the basis of the livelihood of the rural communities. In Kyrgyzstan, there are many constructive reasons to promote such “concepts” towards “concrete practical actions”. Thus, by its status as member-oriented organization, present in most of the rural areas of the country, the association will actively contribute in achieving tangible results that will concretize, in the field, one of the basic principles of rural development, green economy and green growth, *i.e.:* achieve better socioeconomic conditions, while preserving environment.

The present situation of the association

Despite its promising potential, the association is still “young” and “weak” and cannot face alone the upcoming challenges. Now, after the termination of Norwegian support (NFG), there is a pressing need for further support in order to preserve and develop the achieved results, strengthen the association status and direct it towards sustainability.

In this objective, the association is looking forward to set up constructive partnership and inviting local and international organizations that are:

- Supporting the development of agriculture and forestry sector in Kyrgyzstan;
- Promoting rural development opportunities through best agriculture practices and sustainable forest management approaches;
- Providing products or services that are of interest for the association’s members, rural people and rural communities.

The association’s perception regarding such partnership is not only the focus on the development of the association itself, but also on the joint realization of tailored actions reflecting the objectives and the requirements of the partners.

By doing so, the association will play active “intermediary” and “facilitating” role that would certainly lead to develop efficient communication system between the partners, maintain a dynamic process of sharing useful information and practices for the advantage of rural people and communities.



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