“GAP ORGANIC AGRICULTURE CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT”

GAP is acronym in Turkish for “Southeastern Anatolian Project”. The GAP region today is poised to undergo a transformation from a region mired with low productivity, unemployment, migration, social problems and relative underdevelopment to a region based on new competitive advantages. The main strategies for their transformations:

Sustainable Production: This involves a realignment of key productive sectors (e.g. agriculture, tourism and textiles) around a common strategy of sustainable production – featuring organic products, produced by largely renewable energy resources, under fair market labour, supporting entrepreneurship development. Through this combination of techniques, the region wants to carve out a leading position among emerging regions worldwide.

GAP Project pays a particular attention to sustainable use of natural resources, especially water. Public, as well as private institutions such as water users associations give intensive participatory training to farmers on water use efficiency. On the other hand, modern pressurized systems such as drip and sprinkler irrigation are introduced and supported on wide scale. The government offers many possibilities like grants or low interest credits to farmers in order to spread pressurized irrigation systems in the Region.

At the moment around 300,000 ha is being irrigated, which is expected to reach 1 million ha by end of 2012. This indicates that vast areas will open up to irrigated farming in a very short period of time. It is expected that cotton will still be the dominant industrial crop in the newly irrigated areas.

In 2007, a group of national and international experts (about 20) performed several field works, assessment meetings and analysis in Ankara and GAP Region with the participation of official bodies, private sector and NGOs and come up with a study called “GAP Competitive Agenda”. The purpose of the study is to identify the sectors and strategies which are able to increase the competitiveness of the region and branding the region.

In the light of 5 basic strategies;

- Sustainable production
- Development of entrepreneurship
- Internationalization
- Applied technology centers
- Clustering and network creation

3 Sectors:

- Renewable energy
- Tourism
- Organic Farming- Organic textile-Organic kids clothes
Furthermore, GAP Action Plan will support;

1) Organic Farming Cluster Development
2) Expansion of the Production of renewable energy and its usage
3) Institutionalization of GAP Competitiveness Council projects

GAP Organic Farming Cluster Development Project is implemented within the framework of the 2012 GAP Action Plan in “Realizing Economic Development” strategic development axis under the title of “Agriculture” Action number 7.2 “implementation of special qualified regional development projects”.

What is our goal?
The project aims at putting agricultural potentials of the GAP Region primarily the Şanlıurfa area to use and to develop the organic textile, food and beverages sectors towards a competitive market position by means of cluster development approach.

What is the duration of the project?
The duration of this project which started in 2009 with the feasibility study is 4 years and it is expected to be completed at the end of 2012.

What do we expect from the project?
The expected economic benefits are the increased exports of organic food and beverages as well as of organic textile and apparel goods and increased employment rate in the manufacturing and service sectors.

Other expected social benefits of the GAP Organic Cluster Development Project are environmentally sensitive production; reduced carbon emissions; reduced negative impacts on soil and water resources, reduced negative impacts on human health and again increased employment rate in the manufacturing and service sectors.

How do we run the project?
Gap Organic Cluster Development Project consists of 5 major components:
Component 1: Organic Cluster Roadmap Development;
Component 2: Pilot projects and Demonstrations;
Component 3: Branding, promotion and visibility;
Component 4: Establishment of the Organic Farming Information and Innovation Center;
Component 5: Institutional Capacity Building

The cluster development action plan will be developed after the Organic Cluster Roadmap is exposed. Within this framework, pilot projects, demonstration studies and intensive training programs will be implemented.

One of the most important outcomes of this project will be the establishment of the Organic Agriculture Information and Innovation Centre in the GAP Region.
The information and innovation center which will reduce the lack of information, extension services and training regarding organic farming will be developed with the support and guidance of involved institutions and continue serving after the project.

**Where will the project be implemented?**

Gap Organic Farming Cluster Development Project will be implemented in all GAP provinces and will be managed from Şanlıurfa.

**Whom will we cooperate with?**

The primary target groups of the project are agricultural producers, SMEs, NGOs, universities, research institutes, related firms, public institutions and organizations. The success of the project depends on close cooperation and the good communication between the stakeholders.

**Value Chain Analysis**

Southeast Anatolia has a huge potential for a very successful organic agriculture cluster development. In organic cotton and textile it can become the Number One in the world. The organic food cluster could develop well in the slipstream of the organic cotton cluster

**Strengths**

Factor conditions:

Good soils, irrigation and large filed sizes make sufficient raw material available (20,000 ha of organic farming in GAP); low-cost labour on hand

Demand Conditions:

Growing local and international demand for organic food and textiles; GAP is located near to markets

Related and Supported Industries:

Strong support from GAP, Chambers, Agricultural Directorates and Textile Exchange; availability of a range of processing facilities, some already certified organic.

Organic textiles and food could become a major business in GAP providing employment and income for many people including women and youth.


The target of “GAP Organic Farming Cluster Development Project” is to produce 400.000 tons of organic cotton or 160.000 tons of lint in 100.000 ha of land. Thus, GAP Region will become one of the most important organic cotton providers in the world. The project also aims to develop textile industry in the GAP Region, so that, the region will be an important attraction center for organic textile.


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