



FAO One Country One Priority Product

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Newsletter

Dear readers,

Welcome to the first edition of the **One Country One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative's Newsletter**, which covers progress made since its launch in September 2021. We are pleased to share details of the Highlights, Implementation and Coordination, Communication and Partnership, and Field Story. We urge all OCOP supporters to share this newsletter widely within their network to showcase what has been achieved and incentivize more engagement with the OCOP initiative.

This initiative aims to develop sustainable value chains for Special Agricultural Products (SAPs) and support small and family farmers reap the full benefits of a global market and ultimately help the transformation of current agrifood systems. We believe that prioritizing SAPs can create a world of difference in people's lives, while also addressing more than one of the

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities).

We echo the words of the FAO Director-General, QU Dongyu, to describe the OCOP: "Promoting sustainable development through better production; Improving competitiveness by branding national products."

Thank you for embarking with us on this global, regional, and national endeavour with OCOP. We look forward to working together to ensure the continuous success in all the activities of the OCOP, and we wish you good health, prosperity, and happy reading!

Jingyuan Xia

Highlights

- Globally, the OCOP initiative was launched on 7 September 2021, with the virtual participation of over 1 000 attendees from more than 150 countries. In October 2021, the OCOP Steering Committee was established and is chaired by the FAO Director-General while the OCOP Secretariat was also set and is hosted by NSP.
- The OCOP Country Projects were launched on 3 November 2022 during the First FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Plant Production. Updates on the OCOP were provided by the Director-General, QU Dongyu, and the Deputy Director-General, Beth Bechdol, to FAO Members, FAO Programme Committee, the FAO Council in November-December 2022, and the FAO Global Think Labs on 13 December 2022.
- Regionally, the OCOP initiative was launched in all five FAO regions from March-July 2022, with the active participation of ministers, senior government officials, technical institutions, private sector, donors, and FAO partners.
- At the country level, nominations of SAPs were received from 82 countries across the five FAO regions to promote



53 SAPs that cover field and horticultural crops as well as forest and livestock products. The first-round demonstration project countries inclusive of all five FAO regions have been identified for the implementation of OCOP, and consist of Bangladesh, Egypt, Malawi, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uzbekistan promoting sustainable development of jackfruit, date palm, banana, cacao and sweet cherry, respectively.

- Three technical trainings were co-organized by FAO and the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) on the sustainable development of field, fruit and horticulture crops from 28 to 30 November 2022 with the presence of over 140 participants, from more than 15 countries across the five FAO regions.



Communication and Partnership

- The OCOP Global Action Plan was developed and translated into six official UN languages which provides the guidelines for each country to select its SAP and formally apply to join the OCOP initiative.
- The OCOP website, which is available in six official UN languages, was officially launched on 3 November 2022 during the First FAO Global Conference on Sustainable Plant Production. In addition, the Regional Knowledge Platform was established in the Asia and Pacific Region for knowledge sharing on the OCOP implementation.
- The FAO Flexible Voluntary Contribution allocated USD 500 000 for OCOP project to be implemented in Bangladesh, Egypt, Malawi, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uzbekistan to promote the selected SAPs. The project activities will be implemented in each country in close collaboration with the FAO Country Offices as well as national and regional stakeholders.
- In addition, the Government of Japan pledged USD 600 000 to support Ghana in promoting soybean as SAP.

Implementation and Coordination

- Five Regional Coordination meetings were conducted with the participation of the OCOP Regional Focal Points, to discuss the implementation of OCOP at the regional and national levels.
- Two National Coordination meetings were held with the participation of the OCOP National Focal Points in the five demonstration countries to discuss the implementation of OCOP.

Field Story

Banana is a very important food crop in Malawi. However, 30 000 ha of banana plantations, representing 90 percent of total production are lost, due to the Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV) disease that is causing devastating losses since 2004. To meet the national demand for bananas, the country imports a minimum of 20 000 metric tonnes annually from the United Republic of Tanzania and Mozambique, which is the equivalent forex loss of USD 8 million.

In addition, banana crops are affected by abiotic stresses, but lack modern crop management technologies and an efficient processing industry. The Government of Malawi has requested FAO to support the development of their banana sector, and has been selected as one of five demonstration countries under the OCOP initiative.

In July 2022, Jingyuan Xia, NSP Director, conducted a site visit to the Malawian banana plantations and he also presented the OCOP at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Malawi.



Banana plant damaged by BBTB in Malawi

An assessment of the banana value chain was discussed with the Government of Malawi as an initial step to launch a Banana Sector Development Plan in Malawi. The OCOP Secretariat will provide support to the development of a technical network including national researchers, agriculture and extension specialists, farmers and agribusiness.

Contact information:

OCOP Secretariat
 E-mail: OCOP@fao.org
 Web address: <http://www.fao.org/one-country-one-priority-product/en>
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
 Rome, Italy



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