



FAO One Country One Priority Product Newsletter

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Highlights

Vibrant regional launch and workshop on the implementation of the OCOP country projects in Trinidad and Tobago. The regional launch event, held in Port of Spain on 28-29 August 2023, brought together over 120 participants from 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries. The event featured presentations on the progress of OCOP at global, regional, and national levels. The workshop delved into coordination, technical support, capacity development, and resource mobilization, with participants visiting cocoa value chain facilities and emphasizing the need for innovative approaches to enhance production and marketing.



Participants at the OCOP regional event in Port of Spain

Regional launch and workshop on OCOP country projects in the Near East & North Africa (NENA). The implementation of the OCOP projects in NENA countries launched with a grand event in Cairo, Egypt, from 11 to 13 September 2023. Over 100 participants from 13 countries in the region attended the event. Currently, 10 countries including, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, and Yemen have already joined the initiative. Additionally, three non-OCOP countries, including Oman, Sudan, and Libya also joined the event. The event featured workshops, field visits, and discussions emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts for food security in the region.



Participants at the OCOP regional event in Cairo

Current status of the OCOP initiative



83 countries applied to promote 53 Special Agricultural Products.



Implementation of the OCOP country projects in five regions launched from May to September 2023.



Over 11 million USD mobilized to implement OCOP field projects.



The Regional Organizing Groups established in four FAO regions: RAF, RAP, RLC, and RNE.

Implementation and Coordination

Uzbekistan hosted training sessions for more than 130 sweet cherry growers on 10-12 July.

The farmers from the Fergana Region were trained as part of the OCOP initiative to enhance the competitiveness of the produce in domestic and international markets. A three-day training provided guidance on sweet cherry pruning and fertilizer application from five districts in the region. This effort is part of the FAO project "Innovative Approaches for Better Plant Production," supported by the Flexible Voluntary Contribution, with Uzbekistan focusing on sweet cherries as its Special Agricultural Product under the OCOP initiative.

The first meeting of the Regional Organizing Group (ROG) for the OCOP initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Santiago, Chile, on 31 August.

The main objective of the group is to work closely with the OCOP project countries in the region through the respective National Task Forces and support the OCOP Steering Committee established at FAO headquarters. The Terms of Reference and the composition of the ROG were discussed and endorsed at the meeting. Mr. Jingyuan Xia, the Executive Secretary of the OCOP Secretariat, shared updates on the global progress of the initiative highlighting the importance of strong partnerships for its successful implementation.



Bangladesh hosted a national consultation meeting on 3 September at the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council in Dhaka to develop a new project on green development of jackfruit as a special agricultural product. More than 40 experts, including policymakers, extension personnel, academics, researchers, entrepreneurs, traders, and farmers, actively participated in the event.

The first meeting of the ROG for the OCOP initiative in the Near East and North Africa held in Cairo, Egypt, on 14 September.

Composed of a diverse group of stakeholders, the group will provide technical guidance, strengthen partnerships and ensure successful implementation of the initiative in the region. Attended by 40 ROG members, the meeting endorsed the Terms of Reference and ROG composition. In her virtual opening remarks, Ms. Beth Bechdol, FAO Deputy Director-General, stressed the crucial role of robust regional coordination. Mr. Jingyuan Xia, the Executive Secretary of the OCOP Secretariat, shared updates on global OCOP progress.



National Task Force of Egypt for OCOP implementation held its inaugural meeting

on 14 September laying the groundwork for coordinated implementation of OCOP in the country. The task force includes senior managers from the ministries along with experts from key organizations like the Central Laboratory for Date Palm Research and FAO's Egypt Country Office.

* More details updates are available on the [OCOP news webpage](https://www.fao.org/one-country-one-priority-product/news-and-events/news/en)
www.fao.org/one-country-one-priority-product/news-and-events/news/en

Communication and Partnerships

Leveraging Geographical Indications Environment and Sustainability (GIES): An international workshop in China brought together OCOP focal points from five Asia-Pacific countries to explore GIES for OCOP implementation. Co-organized by FAO and the Chinese Academy of Sciences in August, the workshop included a forum, field visits, and capacity-building sessions on GIES technology's potential for tracing the origin of Special Agricultural Products. Participants discussed GIES applications in OCOP countries and established a cooperative framework between FAO and key stakeholders for the Asia-Pacific region to benefit OCOP countries¹.

Explore the OCOP resources on each demonstration country and wider regional activities².

Watch the online training sessions developed by FAO in partnership with Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences, with resources available online that cover twelve SAPs, including all those chosen for development by the OCOP demonstration countries³.

Field story from Egypt

The thriving date palm sector ready for growth

Egypt's date palm sector stands as a shining example of agricultural excellence on the global stage. With over 16 million date palm trees, Egypt leads the world in date production with approximately 1.7 million tonnes of production per year, representing 17.8 percent of world production in 2020⁴. Over one million Egyptian families support the sector, and 70 percent of those engaged in production are smallholder farmers. The country's strategic geographical location, coupled with its ancient tradition of date palm cultivation, positions it as a prominent player in the international date market.

¹ www.fao.org/one-country-one-priority-product/pilot-countries/en

² www.fao.org/one-country-one-priority-product/resources/en

³ www.fao.org/one-country-one-priority-product/resources/trainings-and-webinars/en

⁴ FAO. 2023. *Feasibility study for application of digital technologies for improved traceability and transparency along the agrifood value chains – Case studies in the Near East and North Africa Region*. Cairo. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc7582en>

In addition to being a major supplier of dates to the Middle East and North Africa, Egypt has been making strides in expanding its market reach, exporting dates to over 120 countries. This diversification in markets, combined with a focus on high-quality production, has led to increased revenues for Egyptian date farmers and further solidified Egypt's position as a global leader in the date palm sector.



A farmer is harvesting dates in a farm in Wadi Natroun, Egypt

Recognizing the potential, OCOP initiative is helping Egypt promote dates as the country's Special Agricultural Product (SAP) through an integrated approach, developing all aspects of the date value chain - production, processing, and marketing - to enhance the industry's resilience and competitiveness. The OCOP country projects will address the persistent challenges faced by the sector, including underutilization of modern technologies, insufficient infrastructure and knowledge resources, preventable losses in the value chain, and threats from climate change and pests. By prioritizing the date palm industry, Egypt not only ensures food security for its citizens but also offers an example of how a traditional crop can thrive on the global stage, contributing to economic growth and rural development. As Egypt's date palm sector continues to grow, it is expected to serve as a model for other countries in the region that are looking to advance their SAP's value chains and foster sustainable agricultural development.

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