**FAO continues supporting small-scale investments in Tajikistan’s agriculture**

With the aim to ensure inclusive economic growth by supporting the most vulnerable families in rural areas of Tajikistan, the signing ceremony of the matching grant agreements and cash distribution took place today in Tajikistan’s western Yovon district. The initiative was supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the local authority of the district under a multi-country project, funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)

In total, 51 successful matching grant winners from Dahana and Norin jamoats of Yovon district have received grants to realize their business plans. The investments will mostly support improved agricultural production, greenhouses for lemon and vegetables production, livestock production with a focus on sheep breeding and meat production, as well as poultry breeding.

A matching grant is a one-off, non-reimbursable transfer for a particular aim and on condition that the recipient makes a specified contribution for the same purpose.

224 business-applications have been screened by FAO, and district local authority and community members. With the support from specialists, farmers have further elaborated their business proposals based on pre-selected ideas.

“FAO developed and is now successfully scaling up the matching grant model to support agricultural development in Tajikistan,” said Oleg Guchgeldiyev, FAO Representative in Tajikistan. “The main goal of these projects is to improve production, nutrition, environment and life through investment into agriculture and agribusiness. This particular support is aimed at the vulnerable households who suffer from the impacts of COVID-19 and that of climate change. The financial mechanism used will help ensure sustainable income among low-income segments of the communities and growth of the rural economy, as they can stimulate market development and innovations.”

Now, beneficiaries will begin realizing their ideas. FAO, together with the local authority of Yovon district, will monitor the grants’ performance and support the entrepreneurs with technical advice.

This activity was carried out within the GEF-supported FAO project “Integrated natural resources management in drought-prone and salt-affected agricultural production landscapes in Central Asia and Turkey ('CACILM2'). The project aims to contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, promote sustainable land management and climate-smart agriculture practices, increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner, reduce rural poverty, increase farmers’ capacity to cope with climate change caused challenges, as well as increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises.