



Federal Ministry
of Food
and Agriculture

Bilateral Cooperation Programme

BMEL projects with other countries

Background of the Bilateral Cooperation Programme

Agri-food markets are interconnected worldwide. Climate change, animal diseases and epidemics do not stop at national borders. In addition, there are global and multinational commitments, especially with regard to realising the sustainability objectives laid down in Agenda 2030. The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) therefore works to ensure the achievement of key targets in agricultural and food policies at European, bilateral and multi-lateral levels.

The sustainable, high-performance German agri-food industry is regarded as a successful model in many parts of the world. German industry's administrative organisation, legal structures and capacity for self-organisation also constitute a wealth of experience for which there is a demand in many countries. Knowledge transfer on specialist, technological, organisational and legal matters is therefore a principal component of bilateral project work.

Goals

The programme aims to strengthen bilateral relations and improve the general conditions of the agri-food sector in order to achieve an efficient, resource-conserving and entrepreneurial farming sector.

Concept

The project cooperation takes reform projects undertaken by partner countries as a starting point or helps raise awareness for important agricultural connections and promote opinion-forming processes in these countries. Central to this programme is the direct sharing of specialist knowledge between agricultural actors. The projects are developed, implemented and managed in close coordination with the partner countries. The partner country is



itself generally expected to contribute appropriately to the project. The cooperation projects give rise to intensive cooperation which promotes bilateral relations and mutual understanding in many ways at technical, economic and political levels.

Implementation

The BMEL has commissioned a general agent, GFA Consulting Group GmbH (GFA), to undertake the overall management of the bilateral cooperation programme. The GFA develops the project schemes, commissions executing agencies with the implementation of the projects and monitors and evaluates them.

Project schemes

1. Dialogue formats:

- Agricultural policy dialogues which are geared to the long term and cover a broad range of topics
- Agricultural dialogues on one or a few specific core topics that may also contain more extensive practical components.

These are mainly directed at parliaments, governments and specialised bodies. Topics focus, for example, on agricultural trade policy, support policies,



land rights, seed sector, cooperative businesses, promotion of organic farming and food safety. Bearing the reform agenda of the partner country and German interests in mind, the issues to be addressed are determined on an individual basis to meet specific needs.

2. Practical demonstration and training projects:

Technical and managerial staff are provided with theoretical and practical knowledge and skills related to sustainable cultivation, modern and animal-friendly husbandry systems and farm management.

3. Cooperation projects with industry associations:

In order to strengthen the capacity for self-organisation in the agricultural sector, support is given to farmers' associations and umbrella organisations of agricultural cooperatives to enable them to better represent the interests of their members and provide more tailor-made services for members and rural residents.

In addition, the Bilateral Cooperation Programme may also address the fostering of young talent or exchange of professional staff.

Focus countries

The Bilateral Cooperation Programme emerged from consultative activities under the Federal Government's so-called TRANSFORM programme that dates back to 1992. The TRANSFORM programme was intended to familiarise countries in central and Eastern Europe with market-economy structures. In 2008, the mandate was widened to cover chosen partner countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and South America. It is mainly aimed at threshold countries that are important in terms of agri-food policy and which are, at the same time, focus countries of BMEL bilateral cooperation.

It has become evident that strong synergies can be created, provided that cooperation with the respective partner country is diverse and strategically sound, that projects are interlinked and that cooperation is geared for the long term. At present, there is particularly intensive cooperation with partner countries China, Ukraine and Ethiopia.

Agrarfachliche actors

All three project formats make targeted use of the expertise of the German agricultural sector, especially that of associations, expert groups, scientists and educational facilities. International companies, particularly those operating in agricultural engineering, seed and livestock production, contribute their expertise and benefits-in-kind to demonstration and training projects. German actors, in turn, gain experience and establish new contacts in the partner countries.

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