

Organic in Action

Gap Project, Southeast Anatolia, Turkey: The "Cradle of Sustainable Civilizations"



Why is organic agriculture important to the region?

Dr. Nusret Mutlu explains...

Southeast Anatolia is one of the most socially and economically underdeveloped regions in Turkey. According to the State Planning Organization, the Region is the second least developed region in Turkey. A considerable portion of the economic output of the Region is derived

from agriculture and trade. Although the region is endowed with favorable natural conditions (good soils, abundant fresh water), most of the income generation in the region is concentrated around the value-adding farming and processing. These same favorable conditions create great potential for organic production with higher value addition which could benefit sustainable development in the Region. However, this potential has not yet been realised.

“Our aim is to turn the Southeast Anatolia Region into the “Cradle of Sustainable Civilizations” by integrating the Region with national and international markets and with a unique selling proposition in areas like renewable energy, organic textiles and organic agriculture contributing to sustainability and social equality.”

Dr. Nusret Mutlu, South East
Anatolia Project

As part of the UNDP [Competitiveness Agenda](#), an Organic Agriculture Cluster in Southeast Anatolia is being developed to mobilize the organic production potential. The Competitiveness Agenda has been developed by UNDP in collaboration with the Turkish Government (GAP

RDA) within the scope of the EU-funded GAP-GIDEM (Entrepreneurship Support Centers) Project. (Note: [GAP](#) stands for ‘South Eastern Anatolian Project’, a multi-sectoral and integrated Turkish regional development project based on the concept of sustainable development).

Why is organic agriculture important to the region?

The purpose of the Project is to increase the international competitiveness of the organic agriculture sector in the Region (especially in Sanliurfa) and improve the local business environment by establishing an Innovation and Information Centre, extending best practices (trials and demonstrations), building local capacity, and promoting the Region nationally and internationally.

How far have we come?

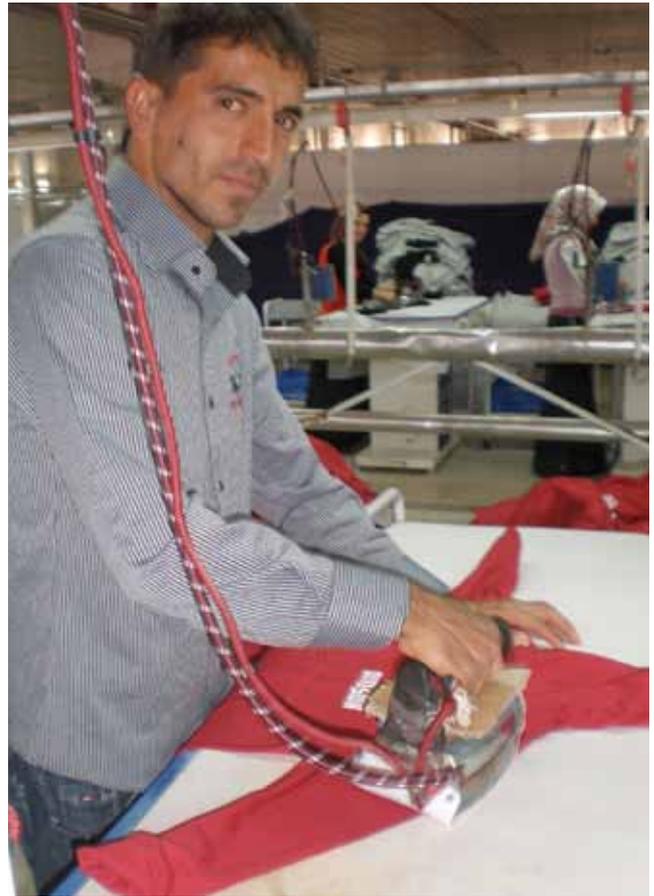
The first year of the project was spent in detailed field analysis and collecting comprehensive background information on the current status of the organic sector in the GAP Region. Detailed value chain analyses on selected products, study tours of international best practice, and the preparation of roadmap studies incorporating detailed a competitiveness analysis were completed by the end of 2011.

With the introduction of the Organic Agriculture Cluster Initiative Roadmap, the Project's Southeast Anatolia Organic Cluster will focus on developing effective collaboration through Working Groups on Organic Cotton, Organic Food, Branding and Promotion as well as Institutional Capacity Building. In parallel, pilot studies will create success stories which can be replicated in a sustainable manner. An Organic Agriculture Innovation Centre will provide consultancy, information and training services to support infrastructure in production and marketing capabilities.

There will be eight pilot activities supported in 2012 and 2013. In early 2012, the Organic Cluster Management Board has been set up with the participation of all relevant cluster actors. The five Working Groups, which will be the operating structure of the Project, are also on the way to become fully operational.



PHOTOS: (Top) Ant Gıda organic cotton project with Tayyar Doğan (project leader) and Suphi Öncel (one of "his" organic cotton farmers), (Bottom) Tigris dam.



PHOTOS (all): Manufacturing process at Internet Tekstil in Adiyaman.

More about...

UNDP Turkey - Environment And Sustainable Development Programme

Turkey's vulnerable ecosystem has been placed under increasing stress by high population growth, rising incomes and energy consumption. In Turkey, as elsewhere in the world, environmental problems such as water shortages, land degradation, lack of clean and affordable energy resources severely hinder efforts to achieve sustainable development. In addition to these problems climate change poses a threat to the achievement of the MDGs and related national poverty eradication and sustainable development objectives.



To help Turkey find solutions, UNDP works closely with a number of government agencies, municipalities, private sector partners and NGOs, to integrate environmental and sustainable development principles into national and regional development policies and plans. UNDP Turkey not only promotes mainstreaming environment, climate change and energy efficiency into sectoral policies, but also supports strengthening the institutional and policy capacities.

National priority: Protecting the environment and increasing competitiveness for sustainable development.

Outcome: Strengthening policy formulation and implementation capacity for the protection of the environment, and cultural heritage in line with sustainable development principles and taking into consideration climate change and disaster management.

Focus Areas:

- Climate change
- Energy (renewable energy and energy efficiency)
- Biodiversity
- Land degradation
- Water governance
- Sustainable development
- Chemicals (Persistent Organic Pollutants)
- Disaster risk management and early warning systems



Visit the [United Nations Development Programme - Turkey](#) to find out more

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Designed by Evonne Tan

Textile Exchange inspires and equips people to accelerate sustainable practices in the textile value chain. We focus on minimizing the harmful impacts and maximizing the positive effects of the global textile industry. Our signature program focuses on organic cotton value chains; improving lives for farmers, stimulating markets, and supporting best practice.

Website: farmhub.textileexchange.org/

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