

Country (Insert country of origin of your company / organization or its headquarters' location)

Turkey

Submitting Organization/Company

WWF-Turkiye

If Organization or Company, please indicate the approximate number of employees

< 250

Please indicate the number of employees

57

Title of the action

Collective Action for Scaling up Regenerative Agriculture in Cotton Production in Buyuk Menderes basin

Upload your logo or an image



Relevant Website

<https://www.wwf.org.tr/>

Main Partners

Pioneering Farmers, multi-national brands, Soke Cotton Water Stewardship Committee

Other Partners

Ministry of Agriculture, Development Agency, Chambers of Agriculture

Type of initiative

Civil Society

Description of action

The Buyuk Menderes river basin in Turkiye is vital for people, nature, and the economy; it supplies water to 2.5 million people and agriculture, industry, and tourism. Denizli province generates 60% of national home textile exports, and Aydin province ranks second in cotton production in Turkiye. The basin hosts three potential Ramsar sites and ten legally protected areas. However, the basin has been facing water stress due to increasing water withdrawals and climate change. In addition, the pollution levels of agricultural, municipal, and industrial discharges damage the entire river ecosystem and pose increasing risks for people and nature. Cotton production in the Soke region in Aydin takes place on 98% of the agricultural land, and cotton farming supports 3,000 farmers. Soke region is between two potential Ramsar sites, Bafa Lake and Buyuk Menderes Delta, and cotton farming increases pollution levels in these freshwater habitats. Flood irrigation is the most widely used technique across the Soke plain, and the water use efficiency of this method is very low. While good quality soil for agriculture contains 3% organic matter, this figure is 0.5% in Soke.

Since 2017, WWF-Turkiye has been implementing a Water Stewardship strategy to create technical and financial support mechanisms for the textile industry and cotton production. WWF-Turkiye aims for regional, national, and multinational stakeholders to develop basin-wide partnerships to protect Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) and to reduce resource use in industrial and agricultural production. WWF-Turkiye's regional partnership with the Chamber of Industry launched the Textile Cleaner Production program in Denizli in 2019. The Development Agency provided a grant program for the industry to support energy and water-saving projects.

WWF-Turkiye facilitated the launch of the Cotton Water Stewardship Committee in 2020 and the Committee initially designed a modern irrigation pilot project on 100 ha of 17 farmers. This platform is exemplary in modern irrigation models for cotton-growing regions. WWF-Turkiye has been implementing Better Cotton since 2018 and trained more than 2,000 farmers. WWF-Turkiye started to test the global know-how in regenerative cotton farming in 2020 and demonstrating the benefits. WWF-Turkiye developed a scorecard and Guidelines for better water and soil management.

Pioneering farmers, textile sustainability platforms, and brands are willing to expand sustainable cotton production. WWF-Turkiye aims to scale the pilot projects of modern irrigation and regenerative cotton production to all cotton farms in Buyuk Menderes by 2023 and onwards. WWF-Turkiye will develop a business case for policy & programs to provide technical and financial support for farmers. WWF-Turkiye will stimulate collaboration between public and private sector stakeholders for resource mobilization to enhance soil and water management in downstream Aydin. The business case for sustainable cotton will be replicable in other regions in Turkiye and cotton farming at the global level.

Type of action

Traceability

Please select the specific area/s of the action

Norms and standards

Incentives

Research and Development of Innovative Solutions

Awareness and Education

Collaborative Initiatives

Business Management Systems or Instruments

Scope of the action, including a description of the value chain processes that are covered

Objective (max 200 words): WF-Turkiye's long-term targets for Buyuk Menderes river basin are: • Mitigation of operational risks in agricultural production • Increased competitiveness of local cotton production • Enhanced soil and water health for ecosystems, businesses and communities • Protection of freshwater habitats as well as species and their populations WWF-Turkiye aims to facilitate the development of a business case that enhances water and soil management in cotton farming that is scalable to all cotton farmers in Buyuk Menderes, which is replicated in other regions in Turkiye and cotton farming at the global level. The collective action of multi-stakeholders would enable mechanisms for creating technical and financial support for cotton farmers to assist them in improving soil and water management at the farm level in the Buyuk Menderes basin

Commitments (max 200 words): N/A

Value Chain Scope: from farm level to brand

Timeframe and/or milestones for the action

Timeframe of the program implementation is between 2020 and 2025. Below are milestones by 2025.

- M&E and Verification Tools in place, including Regenerative Scorecard for leveling the ecological enhancement and GIS and remote sensing technologies
- Demonstration of benefits of regenerative farming in the pilot testing in minimum 5 years of implementation.
- Policy and programs to for financial and technical support on better soil and water management in agriculture stakeholders and farmers.

Reference instruments and sources used

WWF Global Programs, Initiatives and Approaches

1) Water Stewardship Initiative:

https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our_focus/freshwater_practice/water_management/ 2) Bankable

Nature Solutions Initiative:

https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our_focus/finance/bankable_nature_solutions/ 3) Sustainable Cotton:

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/industries/cotton> 4) Nature Based Solutions:

https://wwf.panda.org/discover/our_focus/climate_and_energy_practice/what_we_do/nature_based_solutions_for_climate/ 5) Landscape Approach:

http://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/downloads/final_wwf_landscape_elements_09_11_i_1.pdf

Collective Action for Buyuk Menderes basin and for Regenerative Agriculture Videos

1) Time for Regenerative Agriculture in Aydin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2bTmqmLxkg> 2) Run

Blue Campaign Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CDdwoUE5E> 3) Journey of Water: Buyuk

Menderes (teaser) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXglPUSdQsg&list=PLhW0FpVH8GN7TZW4J00snoCWTiZ0MhPrI&index=5>

4) Journey of Water Documentary (WWF-Turkiye) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asUZvkscUIE&list=PLhW0FpVH8GN7TZW4J00snoCWTiZ0MhPrI&index=7>

Expected benefits and impact for the stakeholders involved

Enhanced visibility of compliance with sustainability requirements by industry actors/partners along the

entire value chain

Enhanced traceability of the social/environmental/ethical attributes of product(s)/materials along the value chain; for example, for origin, quality, sustainability performance, and compliance with health and safety requirements for consumers and workers

A measurable impact on sustainability in value chains over time, eventually verified through life-cycle assessments and/or sustainability certifications

Mitigation of operational risks in agricultural production Increased competitiveness of local cotton production Enhanced soil and water health for ecosystems, business and communities Protection of freshwater habitats as well as species and their populations.

Stakeholders involved

Business and industry associations

Local authorities

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Scientific and technological community

Workers and trade unions

Pioneering farmers, multi-national brands, national authorities

Key performance indicators for the action

the number of stakeholder platforms, action plans, and programs for technical and financial support mechanisms for sustainable cotton and to restore the ecosystem services in the target Key Biodiversity Areas; hectares of wetlands protected, conserved or restored; hectares of areas and \$ investments in regenerative cotton farming and modern irrigation; m³ of water saved in cotton farming; % increase in soil organic carbon content; % carbon capture in regenerative practices; % cotton yield & net income from sustainable cotton farming; % decrease input costs in cotton farming.

Good practices

o analyze the land-use change and the ecosystem services.

*GIS Dashboard is available at <https://dashboard.buyukmenderescbs.org.tr/>

How has this UNECE-UN/CEFACT Call to Action contributed to strategic engagement and/or public awareness in support of your commitment?

WWF-Turkiye identified that brand demand is the driver of sustainability in the supply chain. The question is who will cover the additional and high costs of traceability. Brands, cotton farmers, and agricultural associations state that they need platforms for traceability. Sustainability platforms are willing to enhance traceability mechanisms. However, all

parties are still exploring opportunities. It requires more time for functioning programs for traceability in the supply chain and direct procurement mechanisms. UNECE Sustainability Pledge Platform serves an environment to support WW -Turkiye in its aim to enhance traceability mechanism.

Link to relevant goal(s) and specific target(s) of the United Nations

