

To fully capitalise on its potential opportunities, organic agriculture needs to reach mainstream policies and be seen as a pivotal strategy.

UNEP. (2011). Organic Agriculture: A Step towards the Green Economy in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia region.



“We believe that organic farming represents the future of this country; it represents a tremendous strength for us because there exists a worldwide niche market for organic products [...]. We are confident that an investor would be hard-pressed not to see this potential when visiting Georgia.”

Mr. Davit Kirvalidze, Georgian Minister of Agriculture, speaking on the country's foreign investment opportunities and incentives. The American Times [online]. 31st December 2012.

GREEN *economy*



Did You Know...

...that from 2003 to 2011, the area of land under organic production in Moldova was effectively doubling each year? At the peak of its production in 2010, Moldova's organic products were worth over US\$ 30 million.

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Organic Food & Agriculture:
Opportunities for Greening
the Economy, Promoting Trade
and Building Natural Capital





Did You Know...

...that between 2003 and 2013 the organic market in the European Union increased fourfold, while its organic land area only doubled? With internal production falling short of the demands of the EU's expanding organic retail sector, the neighbouring East European producers are strategically well positioned to increase their exports to this market.



THE POTENTIAL OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

Application of green agricultural practices and technologies helps to reverse environmental degradation and poverty, while offering opportunities to access growing international markets. Organic agriculture offers opportunities to countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus to access growing international markets; create new and more rewarding jobs; develop new businesses and agro-tourism opportunities; address climate change; revitalise the countryside and build natural capital – which is essential for sustainable economic growth and wealth creation.

In 2011, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) conducted scoping studies on green economy and organic agriculture in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine. The summary report recognized the potential of organic agriculture to catalyze a transition to a green economy through a package of policy reforms, capacity building measures and investment reallocation. Following up on these studies, UNEP's current activity focuses specifically on the identified need for building capacity to expand national and regional organic sectors.

Investments in organic value chains offer competitive economic returns while helping achieve national environmental goals and poverty reduction targets.

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BUILDING CAPACITY FOR PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN ORGANIC PRODUCTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CAUCASUS

UNEP and its partners are aiming to:

Increase production and trade in organic agricultural products by offering a replicable model for building farm- and company-level capacity to link supply chains to growing European and international organic markets.

These objectives will be achieved by:

1. Developing capacity building material and organising training courses for farms and companies, that will inform them on market opportunities, best practices for production and branding, as well as means of overcoming tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in organic products.
2. Organising national and regional workshops on organic agriculture with participation of the private sector, export promotion bodies and policymakers.
3. Conducting a feasibility study for a sub-regional organic standard in consultation with government agencies, NGOs, farms, companies and business associations.



This project is part of a wider programme entitled "Greening Economies in the Eastern Neighbourhood (EaP-GREEN)", financed by the European Commission and implemented jointly among UNEP, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The organic food & agriculture component of EaP-GREEN, implemented by UNEP, aims to provide support to Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine for enhancing their capacity for production and trade in organic products. The activities and lessons learned will also draw upon experiences from, and be transferrable to, the organic sectors of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Belarus.



Oikos CEE Regional Meeting on Sustainable Agritourism, Georgia, by Hana Kadlecova

Did You Know...

...that countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus have been using low levels of pesticide and fertiliser since 1994, making the region ideal for promoting organic farming?