



SUCCESS STORY

From Plan to Prosperity: Tajikistan's First Land Auction

Ensuring free and equal access to land for farmers



Mr. Izatullo Boboev on the land plot he won at Tajikistan's first land auction.

"The auction gave farmers a good chance to lease land I can confidently make plans to use the land for the next three years."

— Izatullo Boboev

As a 30-year-old entrepreneur, Izatullo Boboev knew that success was the result of planning and maybe a little good fortune. With his plan made — to acquire a plot of land suitable for farming — good fortune came in the form of advice from a local land rights activist: a tashabbuskor.

"I live in Jomi District and learned of the auction — where anyone could bid on agricultural land for lease — from Mr. Khurshed Soliev, our tashabbuskor," said Mr. Boboev. "I got so excited!"

The auction was unprecedented, as was its potential to positively impact Tajikistan's economy. Considering that Tajikistan has only 7 percent arable land — a large portion of which is state-managed — the *Feed the Future Tajikistan Land Market Development Activity* assisted local governments to optimize management of land they hold in a Land Reserve Fund. To this end, the project worked with officials in Jomi and Yovon districts to classify land plots in the Reserve Fund by economic potential, publish information on the plots available for leasing, and develop fair and transparent bidding procedures.

On September 26, 2019, the stage was set for the auction, with Mr. Boboev as one of seven participants registered to bid on five land plots. The competition led to bids above the starting price, but Mr. Boboev kept to his plan. In the end, Mr. Boboev placed the winning bid for his land plot, and walked from the auction hall with a newly signed lease agreement securing his right to use it.

He also had a new plan: to participate in future auctions to expand his farm, and he spread news of this opportunity to fellow citizens, including those abroad. *"A lot of my fellow residents who are in labor migration are interested in acquiring land and want to return to their homeland. They are not aware that they can lease land through auctions. I shared my first successful experience with friends and encouraged them to participate in the auctions,"* Mr. Boboev remarked.

In total, the first auctions supported by the project leased 63.64 hectares of land and will generate approximately US\$102,167 in revenue for local governments over five years. This is, however, just the beginning, and other districts have begun the process to hold their own auctions. With an estimated 2,857,706 hectares held by the Land Reserve Fund, the potential benefits for local governments in Tajikistan and farmers like Mr. Boboev are significant and will ensure the country's limited arable land resources are used to their full economic advantage.