

GIES Supporting FAO OCOP Project in Nepal Launched

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In December 2024, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Nepal Office and the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IGSNRR-CAS) signed a technical cooperation agreement on applying “Geographical Indications Environment & Sustainability” (GIES) technology to Nepal’s “One Country One Priority Product” (OCOP) initiative, under which FAO Nepal Office, IGSNRR-CAS, and Nepal’s Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development jointly launched the GIES case on large cardamom as a flagship product in Kathmandu from April 8 to 19, 2025, with the case area designated in Ilam District, southeastern Nepal. Dr. Li, Xuan, Senior Policy Officer of FAO in Asia and Pacific Region, Mr. Ken Shimizu, FAO Representative for Nepal and Bhutan, Mr. Arun, GC, Project Coordinator, Wang, Shenglin, Deputy Director General of IGSNRR-CAS, Professor Liu, Chuang, Chief Scientist of the GIES Program, Professor Song, Xianfang, Wang, Zhenbo, the program experts, Ms. Li, Limin, the program secretary, along with representatives from Nepal’s Ministry of Agriculture and FAO Nepal Office, totaling over 20 participants attended the launch ceremony and field investigation.

The GIES case of Ilam Large Cardamom Southern Himalaya in Nepal represents a new case of GIES technology supporting FAO OCOP implementation following the Tashgang Quinoa Himalaya Mountain case in Bhutan and Capira District and Ipeti Kuna Village Coffee Tropical Forestry case in Panama. This project aims to scientifically authenticate the ecological environment of Nepal’s premium specialty product—large cardamom—through GIES big data, Internet of Things technologies, and standardized management systems, while establishing origin and product traceability and intellectual property protection. The initiative seeks to enhance market recognition of the brand, protect the ecological environment, increase product value, and promote sustainable development, thereby fulfilling FAO’s OCOP objectives (the “Four Betters”: better production, better nutrition, better environment, and better life, and leaving no one behind). The successful launch of this case demonstrates the steady progress and effective implementation of GIES within FAO’s OCOP technical transfer, open data and knowledge and capacity-building process.

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The implementation of this case study has received strong support from FAO Headquarters in Rome, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. FAO Nepal Country Office, Nepal's Ministry of Agricultural and Ecological Origin Environments and local governments in Nepal jointly lead the project implementation. The joint FAO-IGSNRR-CAS project team conducted field surveys at Nepal's Large Cardamom Research Center and Ilam region, collecting ecological samples while delivering on-site technical training for local cardamom growers and experts.

Dr. Li, Xuan indicated that “The GIES methodology integrates enterprises, universities, research institutions, governments, and community organizations across the entire supply chain—from production to consumption—establishing a scientific traceability system. This provides crucial technical support for OCOP implementation by linking scientific investment with local development.”

Dr. Ken Shimizu, FAO Representative to Nepal and Bhutan, spoke highly of the technical transfer and services provided by IGSNRR-CAS. He noted that as FAO marks its 80th anniversary, “China's GIES methodology and technologies, applied in Nepal's cardamom and Bhutan's quinoa, will further strengthen FAO's capacity-building efforts in both countries, enhance modern agricultural technology and productivity, and contribute more significantly to increasing farmers' incomes, ensuring food security, and promoting sustainable agricultural development. He emphasized that through the technical services provided for Nepal's landmark habitat case study, the institute will establish a demonstrative model for the global OCOP initiative.

Wang, Shenglin, Deputy Director General of IGSNRR-CAS, noted the project's launch during the 70th anniversary of China-Nepal relations marks a milestone in globalizing China's technical standards. It also represents an important symbol of IGSNRR-CAS's commitment to advancing FAO's “Four Betters” objectives and enhancing China-Nepal cooperation. Through the case study, the institute will establish a demonstrative model for services to the global OCOP initiative.

Mr. Wang, Xin, Embassy Charge d'Affaires of P. R. China, stated that the GIES initiative supporting Nepal's cardamom project represented an innovative model for agricultural sustainability. He wished to expand S&T cooperation between the two countries to enhance bilateral trust and high-quality “Belt and Road” initiative.

The application of GIES methodology in Nepal's OCOP large cardamom project has garnered widespread attention from Nepali authorities and media, with national television providing special coverage.



Figure 1 GIES experts conduct field training in Ilam (Photo: Wang, Shenglin)



Figure 2 Project team at the Embassy of P. R. China in Nepal (Photo: Suman Giri)