

Ukraine

Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

**Project on Promotion of Small-Scale
Horticultural Agriculture:
Enhancing Inclusiveness of Women Farmers
(Phase 1)**

Project Completion Report

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Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

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Koei Research & Consulting Inc.**

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	English
C/P	Counterpart
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
JCC	Joint Coordinating Committee
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAPF	Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine
M/M	Minutes of Meetings
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
PDM	Project Design Matrix
PO	Plan of Operations
R/D	Record of Discussions
ToT	Training of Trainers
VET	Vocational education and training institute

1. Project Description

1.1 Background

Agriculture is an important means of livelihood for Ukraine's approximately 13 million rural residents, and prior to the Russian invasion in 2022, it played an important economic role, accounting for 11% of the country's GDP, 20% of the working population, and 40% of total exports. Even after the invasion, its importance has not changed, and one of the 15 national programs outlined in Ukraine's National Recovery Plan (July 2022) is to "grow the value-added economic sector", which includes the agricultural sector. In June 2024, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food (MAPF) of Ukraine formulated the "Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development of Ukraine - 2030" with the aim of creating conditions for the agricultural sector to join the EU. Among its strategic goals are increasing the share of value-added agricultural products, ensuring that all agricultural producers, including small-scale farmers, receive a fair income, and increasing productivity and diversification. It also presents a vision of rural women entering the agribusiness without discrimination and actively participating in rural development. Horticultural agriculture in Ukraine, which is blessed with fertile land resources, has so far faced challenges such as low productivity and insufficient marketing capabilities among farmers, and growth has been limited. It is thought, however, that there is great potential for increasing yields and adding value by introducing new varieties and applying new technologies.

In addition, the role of women in various industries, including the agricultural sector, is increasing in the country due to the decrease in the male workforce caused by the conflict. Women are increasingly required to secure a living while doing housework and raising children due to the conscription of men in the family (the number of soldiers as of January 2025 was 880,000¹). In addition, humanitarian needs to secure livelihoods for vulnerable groups, including demobilized soldiers (1.3 million as of July 2024²) and internally and externally displaced persons (3.7 million internally displaced persons as of December 2024³), are increasing due to the prolonged conflict.

Thus, while there are expected to be growth opportunities in the horticultural agriculture sector in Ukraine and an increase in demand for labor, establishing a livelihood is a common issue for women, internally displaced persons (IDP), and discharged soldiers, who can be considered to be socially vulnerable. Therefore, it is thought that providing socially vulnerable people, including women, with a means of livelihood in the agricultural sector would be beneficial for both Ukrainian agriculture and socially vulnerable people, as it would satisfy the need for labor and provide socially vulnerable people with an opportunity to earn a living.

This project will be implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Agricultural Policy and Food (MAPF), which is in charge of agriculture, and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), which is in charge of vocational training, with the aim of identifying training content and providing vocational

¹ <https://kyivindependent.com/ukraine-war-latest-ukraines-military-now-totals-880-000-soldiers-facing-600-000-russian-troops-kyiv-claims/> accessed on Jan.16, 2025

² Ukraine Fourth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment – Launch event version, February 2025, the World Bank, the Government of Ukraine, the European Union, the United Nations

³ Ukraine Internal Displacement Report Round 19, January 2025, IOM

training necessary to start a new horticultural business or brush up necessary skills and knowledge, mainly targeting vulnerable groups. In the implementation of the project, several institutes will be selected to pilot training, and the necessary training modules will be developed in cooperation with these institutes, but the project will also contribute to the study of a cascade approach to expand the results and systems so that the modules will be available throughout Ukraine in the future.

1.2 Outline of the Project

Under the circumstances described above, this Project will be carried out with the objectives and framework shown in the following table.

Table 1.1 Outline of the Project

Project Purpose	To propose effective training to improve techniques on horticultural agriculture and business skills of vulnerable people, including women.
Period	August 2024 to December 2026
Implementing Agency	- Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine (MAPF) - Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (MoES) - Training institutes under the two ministries
Target Area	Territory covered by Ukraine's administration
Impact	Training is conducted at training institutes other than the pilot ones in line with the training programs proposed by the project.
Outcome	To propose effective solution and method to improve production capacities and business skills of small-scale horticultural farmers, especially women farmers
Outputs	- Challenges in the horticultural sector are identified and countermeasures to strengthen the horticultural sector are proposed. - Training programs for horticultural farmers are developed. - Training programs for horticultural farmers are offered through vocational education and training institutes (VETs) and agricultural universities.
Activities	1-1 Identify current situation, challenges, and good practices by stakeholders, especially by women farmers, in the horticulture sector. 1-2 Propose solutions (agricultural technologies, equipment, materials, and services) that contribute to high value addition and labor saving. 1-3 Hold a series of workshop to share good practices and success stories. 2-1 Identify training institute to provide training to horticulture farmers. 2-2 Formulate training program with VETs and agricultural universities identified as 2-1. 2-3 Provide necessary training equipment and materials. 3-1 Identify target farmers for the training on horticulture. 3-2 Provide training to strengthen the production and management capacity of farmers, including women producers, at training institute identified at the Output 2. 3-3 Amend the training program designed under 2-2 based on the activities under the Output 3.

JICA Project Team, referred to the Record of Discussion (R/D) of the Project

2. Implementation of the Project

2.1 Project Implementation Project

The project is divided into two phases, the first of which was implemented from August 2024 to February 2025, with the following process.

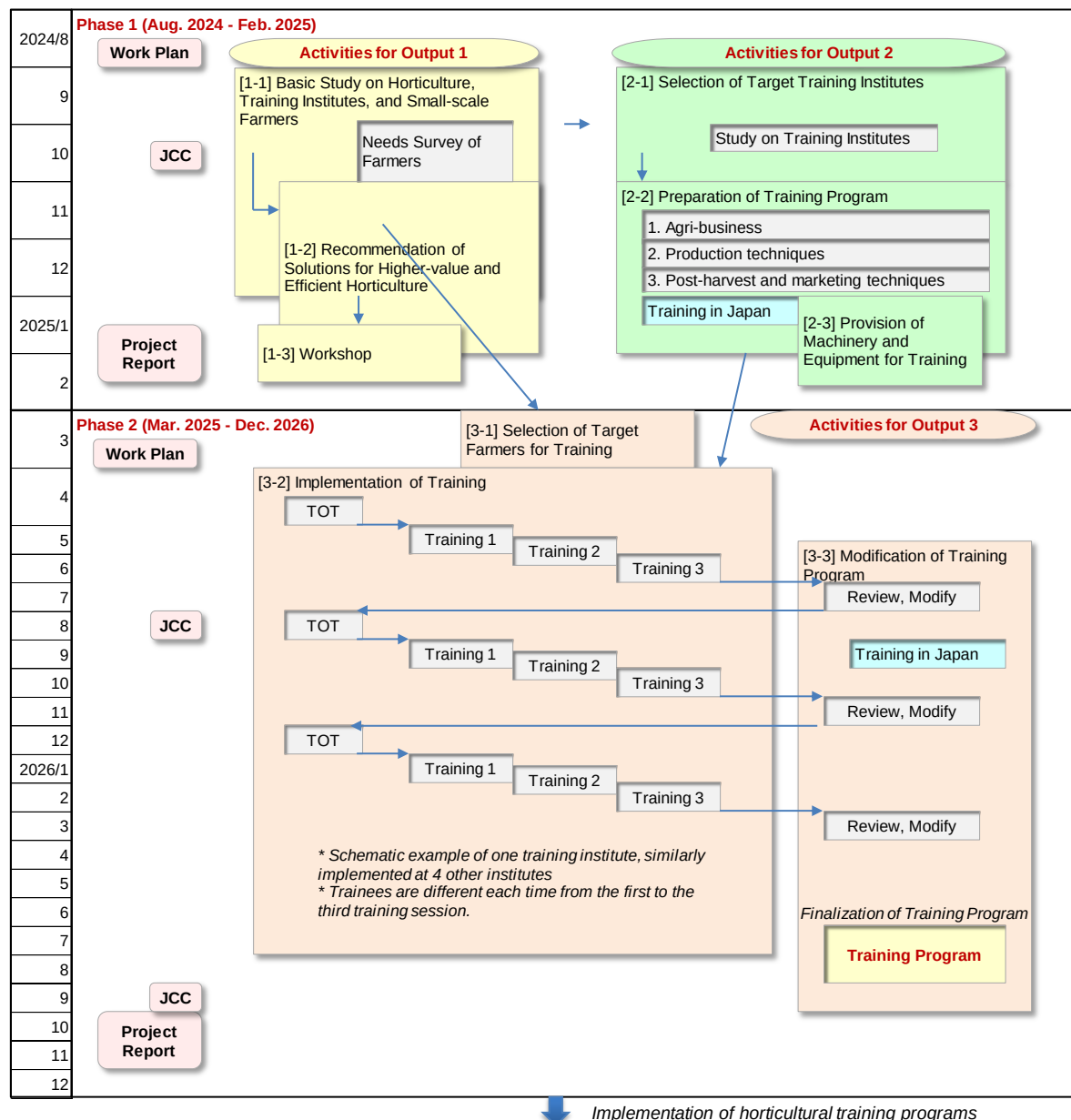


Figure 2.1 Workflow of the Project

2.2 Record of Inputs

2.2.1 Japanese Experts

The project was conducted primarily as a remote operation in Japan by 11 experts in 10 fields, as shown

in the table below. On-site work was conducted by two experts for 10 days, in which 6 days in Ukraine). The total person-month of expert input was 15.97 in total.

Table 2.1 Inputs of Japanese Experts

Expertise	Name	Organization	Person-month
<u>Leader/Agricultural Guidance</u>	Mr. Nishiya Mitsuo	NTC International Co., Ltd.	1.97 (Ukraine 0.33)
Co-Leader/Agricultural Guidance	Mr. Shimizu Keisuke	Nippon Koei Co., Ltd.	1.60
Horticulture	Mr. Kobayashi Keiichiro/ Mr. Sendo Shohei	NTC International Co., Ltd.	2.00
Greenhouse Farming	Mr. Koyama Masayuki	Koei Research & Consulting Inc.	1.50
Agricultural Machinery	Mr. Hotta Takashi	Nippon Koei Co., Ltd.	1.00
Marketing/Business Skill	Mr. Natori Akihiro	Koei Research & Consulting Inc.	1.50
Marketing/Business Skill	Mr. Suwa Koya	Nippon Koei Co., Ltd.	1.00
Gender and Socially Vulnerable Person	Ms. Tanaka Yoko	Koei Research & Consulting Inc.	1.00
Capacity Assessment	Ms. Okata Izumi	Koei Research & Consulting Inc.	1.00
Training Planning/ Contract Management	Mr. Hoshi Makoto	NTC International Co., Ltd.	2.50 (Ukraine 0.33)

2.2.2 Training in Japan

The Training in Japan was implemented for 10 Ukrainian counterparts from MAPF, MoES and the training institutes concerned from January 14 to 23, 2025. The objectives of the training are 1) to visit agricultural training institutes and vegetable production and distribution sites in Japan, and 2) direct discussions between Ukrainian officials and the project team to develop specific training programs. The participants are listed in the following table.

Table 2.2 List of Participants in Training in Japan

Name	Organization	Position
Mr. Rostyslav Voitiuk	Volyn Regional Training Center for Training, Retraining and Advanced Training of Agricultural Personnel	Director
Mr. Heorhii Savchuk	Chernivtsi Regional Training and Advisory Center for Agricultural Personnel	Director
Mr. Maksym Kobzystyi (*)	Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine	Head of the Knowledge Transfer Division
Ms. Yana Zubko (*)	Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine	Chief Expert of the Department for International Cooperation and European Integration
Mr. Volodymyr Ilich Alokhin	Separate structural unit "Nemishaiev Vocational College of the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine"	Director
Ms. Nataliia Vasylivna TSUMAN	Zhytomyr Agricultural Technical College	Head of the Department of Agronomy and Forestry, Candidate of Agricultural Sciences, Associate Professor
Ms. Yaroslava Borysivna Zhyrun	Northern Center of Professional Education	Director
Mr. Mykola Vasylovych Makarevych	Hlybotskyi Vocational Lyceum	Director

Name	Organization	Position
Mr. Serhii Petrovych Kovalenko	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine	State expert of the expert group on issues of management and public-private partnership of the Directorate of Vocational Education
Ms. Oleksandra Yevhenivna Novak	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine	Partnership Expert

Remarks: (*) Two participants from MAPF stayed in Japan from Jan. 18 – 23, 2025.

The places visited are divided into three categories: government and private training institutes, horticultural production sites, and distribution sites, as shown in the table below.

Table 2.3 List of Places Visited

Category	Place Visited
Training Institute	Agricultural College at Ibaraki Prefecture
	Tokyo Development Foundation for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries
	Agricultural Administration Center of Chiba City
	Koibuchi College of Agriculture and Nutrition
Production Site	Genki Nojo Yachimata/ Watanabe Pipe Co., Ltd.
	Japan Plant Factory Association (Chiba University)
	Tomato Grower graduates from Koibuchi College
Distribution Site	Ota Market (Metropolitan Central Wholesale Market)
	Michi no Eki Fuwari Shibayama
	Ichigo House Mitaka (Tourist farm)

2.2.3 Procurement of Machinery and Equipment

In this project, agricultural machinery (tractor set, procured by JICA), training equipment (computer set), and agricultural materials for training (seeds and seedlings, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) will be provided as materials and equipment necessary for the training. In the first phase, the project team confirmed the necessity of these items, and then reviewed the specifications, quantities, and recipients of the necessary equipment and materials, and provided information and other support for bidding for JICA procured agricultural equipment. Procurement of these materials and equipment will be carried out in the second phase.

2.2.4 Provision of Budget of JICA Ukraine Office

Not Applicable.

2.3 Achievement of Outputs

2.3.1 Achievement of Output 1

Regarding the Output 1 "Challenges in the horticultural sector are identified and countermeasures to strength the horticultural sector are proposed", necessary information was obtained during the Phase 1. The activities to achieve this goal are to conduct a basic survey on the following in order to develop a

training plan for small-scale horticultural farmers, mainly women, and to organize and analyze it.

(1) Preliminary assessment of solutions contributing to higher value-added and more efficient horticultural agriculture in Ukraine

Based on the information obtained through the JICA "Data collection survey for assistance for restoration and recovery of Ukraine in agriculture sector"⁴, solutions to key issues contributing to higher value-added and efficiency in horticultural agriculture were identified. These are categorized as 1) productivity and quality improvement, 2) collaborative efforts with other stakeholders, 3) post-harvest processing, 4) agro-processing, 5) branding and marketing, 6) use of digital technology, 7) efficiency of labor management, and 8) energy efficiency. As solutions that are easy for socially vulnerable people to implement, high priority shall be given to 1) relatively low cost, 2) not requiring excessive labor, 3) not requiring too high a level of technology, and 4) easy access to materials and equipment.

(2) Study on training institutes

As an agricultural vocational training institutes in Ukraine, the JICA project team organized information on the organization and personnel structure, as well as the content of education and training, etc., of the 14 institutes under the jurisdiction of MoES and the 8 institutes under MAPF. The project team also conducted a survey on the possession and operation status of the necessary training materials and equipment. A summary of the results of this study is described in Section 2.5.1 Selection of Training Institutes.

(3) Study on small-scale horticultural farmers

Questionnaire surveys and group interviews were conducted with 30 farmers from each of the five organizations selected, regarding the current situation and issues of horticultural agriculture, training needs, etc. A summary of the results of this survey is described in Section 2.5.2 Implementation of Farmer Survey.

(4) Good practices in small-scale horticultural agriculture

In order to solve the problems of small-scale horticultural agriculture in Ukraine, 17 case studies were organized, focusing on 1) ensuring profitability, 2) management of land and water resources, 3) introduction of new technology, 4) marketing strategy, 5) risk management, and 6) consideration for local communities. In order to formulate an effective training program for the promotion of small-scale horticultural agriculture, a workshop was held with relevant parties to exchange opinions, adding the findings of the training in Japan.

⁴ <https://libopac.jica.go.jp/search/detail?rowIndex=0&method=detail&bibId=1000052563>

2.3.2 Achievement of Output 2

The Output 2 "Training programs for horticultural farmers are developed" was also completed based on the results of the Output 1.

Five training institutes were selected as pilot institutes based on the selection criteria to provide short-term training in horticultural agriculture for beginners to the training institutes recommended by MoES and MAPF. Based on the information collected in the previous section, the 10 institutes were narrowed down through a first-round selection process based on the following three criteria: 1) willingness to participate in the project, 2) training mission, and 3) experience in horticultural agriculture guidance. The final selection was made after consultation with MAPF and MoES, based on an evaluation of the following four criteria: 1) capacity of lecturers, 2) facilities and environment, 3) willingness to participate in the project, and 4) other advantages.

For these five institutes, the project team outlined the training program that the project considered, held discussions, and developed a training program. The training program is structured as follows. The training program will be implemented three times in the second phase, and each time the training program will be revised based on the results of achievement tests and questionnaires, monitoring results with the lecturers, etc., with the ultimate goal of developing a training plan for nationwide deployment.

A) Horticultural Agriculture Course

A-1) Agribusiness Course (18 hours)

A-2) Production Technology Course (20 hours)

A-3) Marketing Technology Course (15 hours)

B) Tractor Course (21 hours)

The Project Team supported for procurement of tractors and attachments for tractor training as necessary equipment for the training. This was based on a questionnaire survey of Ukrainian educational institutes on their equipment holdings, management and operations, and additional procurement requests, and a proposal to provide small and medium-sized tractors of high-need models and versatile attachments for a high-priority period. In addition, the specifications and quantities of computers and other equipment necessary for all aspects of the training were also reviewed for provision to the five schools selected as the pilot institutes. Materials for farmer training, such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, farming tools, etc., are being prepared to be procured immediately prior to the second phase of training.

2.3.3 Achievement of Output 3

The Output 3 "Training programs for horticultural farmers are offered through vocational education and training institutes and agricultural universities" is planned to be implemented in the next phase.

2.4 Achievement of Project Purpose

The Project Purpose is "To propose effective solution and method to improve production capacities and

business skills of horticulture farmers, especially women farmers".

At the end of the first phase, we are in the process of identifying issues in horticultural agriculture with a focus on women farmers, proposing directions for solving these issues, and developing a training plan. In the second phase, the training will be piloted at five institutes, and the final training program will be proposed after making improvements to the training program based on monitoring and evaluation.

2.5 Challenges, Measures, and Lessons Learned

2.5.1 Selection of Training Institutes

At the beginning of the project, basic information on 14 institutes under MoES was available, and it was expected that 5 institutes that met the selection criteria would be selected from among them. However, in the course of discussions with the Ukrainian side, MAPF proposed to include institutes that provide vocational training under its umbrella in the survey. Therefore, it became necessary to collect and analyze additional basic information on the 8 institutes recommended by the MAPF.

The institutes recommended by both ministries were evaluated based on selection criteria to determine their priority. The selection criteria were: 1) experience and ability in horticultural agriculture training, 2) facilities and environment, 3) willingness to participate in the project, and 4) other advantages. As an evaluation result, the top 5 were broken down into 1 institute on the MAPF and 4 on the MoES. After discussing the results with the two ministries, it was requested that the MAPF should have 2 institutes and the MoES 3, in order to strike a balance. As a result, the 5 institutes selected were widely distributed in the central and western regions of Ukraine.

Thus, although coordination with both ministries progressed through the process of organizing and selecting information on educational institutes, the additional work affected schedule of the subsequent planned surveys of the actual conditions and needs of surrounding farmers were delayed. Although it was explained at the project kick-off meeting that the selection would be made from among the 14 institutes under MoES, it is believed that the impact on the schedule could have been reduced by confirming the selection with a firm commitment.

2.5.2 Implementation of Farmer Survey

The survey on the actual situation of farmers and their training needs was conducted as a sub-contracted service to a local contractor. The survey items included basic information, training experience, current situation of farming, production, processing and sales, and training needs, training logistics, gender, etc. To conduct this survey, a questionnaire was administered to 30 farmers in the vicinity of the five training institutes. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information necessary for training planning, to limit the number of questions as much as possible in consideration of the respondents, and to include additional questions for discharged soldiers and IDPs. The draft questionnaire prepared by the JICA project team was repeatedly revised based on comments from the subcontractor, who was familiar with the situation in the field, to ensure that the purpose of the questions was conveyed without

misunderstanding, and then the questionnaire was finalized.

For the purpose of cross-checking and partially complementing the survey, a group discussion with the same farmers was conducted in addition to the questionnaire survey. This was facilitated by local project staff rather than a re-contractor. In addition, officials from the training institutes also participated to identify and coordinate training needs, particularly with regard to horticultural agriculture. The main results regarding training needs were as follows.

- The following are the training needs of small-scale farmers.
 - Open-field vegetables: tilling, pest and disease control, selection of varieties, etc.
 - Post-harvest: storage methods, use of chemicals, etc.
 - Processing: pickles, jams, packing, hygiene, etc.
 - Agricultural machinery: new technology, etc.
 - Agricultural management: income and expenditure analysis, agricultural bookkeeping, etc.
 - Marketing: selecting sales channels, creating business plans, etc.
- The challenges faced by women in farming include physical and mental difficulties, a lack of machinery, a lack of skills and knowledge, and a lack of tractor skills.
- The main source of income for all seven of the ex-soldiers and seven out of eight of the IDPs is farming, so there is a high demand for training.
- The following are the requests regarding the implementation of training.
 - The most suitable time to participate in training: January to March
 - The number of days per week: 2 or 3 days
 - The number of hours per day: 2 or 4 hours
 - The most suitable time to participate: 18:00 to 20:00 for men, 14:00 to 16:00 for women

2.5.3 Support for procurement of equipment to be provided by JICA

Since this work is based on a supplementary budget for Ukraine support, progress is strictly controlled from year to year. Although the work will last approximately two and a half years, the work to support the procurement of agricultural machinery based on the Japanese FY2024 supplemental budget has been one of the highest priority tasks since the beginning of the project. This procurement work itself will be carried out by JICA, but it was necessary to quickly determine the specifications and quantities of the required equipment, as well as basic information on where the equipment would be distributed.

The survey was first administered to the 14 training institutes under MoES, as originally indicated, through a questionnaire survey. It was designed to ask about the current status of agricultural machinery (type of machinery, specifications, utilization, and management status, etc.) and additional procurement requests. The specifications of the requested agricultural machinery were sorted out, and the most frequently requested items were tractors of about 50 and 110 horsepower and attachments, such as cultivators, seeders, sprayers, etc. Other items included greenhouse-related facilities, transportation

equipment, and research equipment. Prioritizing the equipment essential for training in field horticulture, the project team narrowed down the basic specifications of the agricultural machinery to be procured and decided to provide the required quantity of these two types of tractors and attachments as a set, which was understood by the Ukrainian counterparts. It is believed that narrowing down the specifications of the machinery in this way will contribute to speeding up the procurement process. Later, as mentioned above, training institutes affiliated with MAPF were also included in the project, and it became necessary to consider the distribution of agricultural machinery to these institutes as well. When the project team asked both ministries for their priorities for distribution, MoES requested distribution to other training institutes, since the initial 14 institutes had a relatively large amount of agricultural machinery in their possession. This request was accepted because it was envisaged that the short-term training for tractors provided by this project would be widely expanded to other institutes in addition to the target institute. In addition, since the number of agricultural machinery owned by MAPF member institutes is lower than that owned by MoES member institutes, it was agreed in the joint meeting that MAPF member institutes would be given high priority.

2.5.4 Workshop of Good Practices

Regarding good practices of small-scale horticultural agriculture in Ukraine, the JICA project team selected 12 cases of good practices on the web, organized their contents, and proposed them to the two ministries. In the process of organizing specifics with the C/P, MAPF proposed three additional examples of results of training conducted by its affiliated training institutes. It was decided that it would be useful to have a common understanding among the parties concerned in order to proceed with the project training. The JICA project team also visited two female horticultural farmers in Ukraine in November 2024, and confirmed that they are excellent cases. These were given a high priority for the workshop because the specific situation was well. Furthermore, it was decided to add the topic of the training as a good opportunity to share the information and lessons learned on horticultural education in Japan among the participants.

The plan was designed to provide an opportunity for participants to examine the policy for the promotion of small-scale horticultural agriculture with a real sense, and to create consensus for future training projects.

2.5.5 Training in Japan

The purpose of this training in Japan was to visit public and private training institutes related to horticultural agriculture in Japan in order to develop a training program, and to deepen discussions on the training implementation plan through direct dialogue with the JICA project team (see “2.2.2 Training in Japan”). As for the trainees, it was decided to accept 10 officials from both ministries and representatives from the five target institutes. The training period was January 14 to 23, 2025. As mentioned above, the participants were requested to report on the findings and lessons learned from the

training in Japan and their reflections on the training program at the workshop to be held after their return to Ukraine.

Based on this policy, on the first day the participants confirmed the content of the inspection related to the issues to be examined, conducted a questionnaire survey during the training, and on the last day discussed the training program and implementation methods in detail. The destinations visited were four public and private institutions offering training on horticultural agriculture, three production sites, and three distribution sites. After the visits, the participants reviewed the findings of each and confirmed how they could be reflected in the training program. In this way, the JICA project team planned and managed the training to be beneficial by devising ways to make the most of the opportunities for training in Japan.

2.6 Transition of PDM

The project framework was specified in the record of discussions (R/D) as described in Chapter 1, but the Project Design Matrix (PDM) or Plan of Operations (PO) was not established, since the type of this project was a technical cooperation for development planning. No changes have been made to the project framework as originally stipulated.

2.7 Record of Joint Coordinating Committee

At the beginning of this project, a kick-off meeting (online) was held for the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) members of MAPF and MoES to explain the work plan. Due to the availability of participants, two meetings were held, one on September 13 mainly for MAPF and the other on October 4 mainly for MoES. In these meetings, the project framework, implementation schedule, and implementation structure were confirmed, and the main activities were explained and the requests for cooperation from the two ministries on these activities were confirmed.

The first JCC meeting was held on December 24, 2024. Although it was originally planned to be held in October, the timing of the JCC was decided in consideration of the items that should be discussed and approved at the JCC, such as the training program development schedule with selected training institutes, the priority list of recipients of agricultural machinery, the training equipment to be provided, and the good practice workshop. The meeting was attended by the vice ministers of both ministries, representatives of the training institutes involved, and participants from JICA headquarters and the JICA Ukraine office, with the Ukrainian counterparts acting as the host and facilitator. As the Ukrainian participants had been briefed and consulted on the progress of the project and matters for consideration about a month before the meeting, the meeting focused on explaining and discussing the important matters that needed to be agreed upon. The main items discussed were: 1) confirmation of the process for finalizing the details of the training program based on the draft program, which will be finalized during the training in Japan in January 2025; 2) confirmation of the status of the discussion on the recipient and quantity of the agricultural machinery (tractor sets); 3) confirmation of the status of the discussion on the recipient and quantity of the training equipment (computer sets); and 4) confirmation

of the implementation policy and methods for the workshop on good practices. The explanations given on these items were generally accepted. During the discussions, the process for tax exemption and registration procedures for the procurement of equipment and materials on the Ukrainian side was confirmed. In addition, regarding the training equipment, the two ministries requested the addition of a power generator or charging device to deal with the risk of power outages during training, and the JICA project team decided to consider this.