



**Economic Transformation Initiative
Planning & Development Department
Government of Gilgit-Baltistan**



NEWSLETTER

JAN-MAR, 2023



- 📍 **GILGIT:** House No. 04, River View Road,
Chinar Bagh, Gilgit
- 📍 **BALTISTAN:** Patwal Olding, near Agha Hadi
Chowk Skardu, Baltistan
- 📍 **DIAMER:** Molana Baqi House Tawheedi
Colony, Chilas, Diamer



GILGIT

05811 – 922550-4

BALTISTAN

05815 – 920152-3

DIAMER

05812 – 920225-6



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KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS QUARTER (JANUARY – MARCH 2023)

Joint Implementation Support Mission of International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS):

A high-level joint implementation support mission of IFAD and AICS visited ETI-GB during January 22-27, 2023. Mr. Fida Muhammad, IFAD Country Programme Officer, and mission leader; Mr Qaim Shan, Portfolio Advisor; Ms Sumaira, IFAD Country Programme Analyst; and Mr Pietro Del Sette, Coordinator Agriculture and Environment, AICS were among the mission members. The main objective of the mission was to review the level of preparedness for implementation; elaboration and finalization of the work programme and approach for the extension period including the integration of the Italian Cooperation's financing. The mission held meetings with project team, relevant government departments, additional chief secretary, GB Rural Support Programme, the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme and several cooperatives and communities related to new ILD/FMR schemes identified by the project.



7th Programme Coordination Committee Meeting:

On March 2, 2023, the 6th Program Coordination Committee (PCC) meeting held under the chairmanship of the Program Coordinator, ETI-GB. A total of 18 infrastructure schemes both ILD and FMR (07 from Gilgit, 06 from Baltistan and 05 from Diamer & Astore) were presented for approval. Of total 18 schemes, PCC approved 13 schemes (6 ILD and 7FMR) whereas 05 schemes were deferred to next PCC with instructions to fulfill some pre-requisite aspects.



Recruitment Against the Key Vacant Posts: In January, recruitment against the vacant posts took place. All three regional programme coordinators, Lead Value Chain, Manager Admin & Human Resources, Communication Officer and M&E and procurement staff were recruited. Mr. Iqtidar Hussain (Col. Rtd), Regional Programme Coordinator Gilgit, Mr. Zeeshan Karim, Regional Programme Coordinator Baltistan, Ms. Amina Wali, M&E Officer, Ms. Ali Naz, M&E Assistant and Ms. Shahnaz Bano Gender & Poverty Assistant were among the newly inducted staff. An orientation session was conducted for newly inducted staff by the leads of all sections to orient staff on programme, its activities, policies, and procedures.



AICS Delegation Visit to GB: On 8th February 2023, a high level seven-member delegation of AICS under the leadership of Director, AICS visited ETI-GB program interventions in Gilgit-Baltistan. Other team members include Head of Monitoring & Evaluation Office, Head of Evaluation Office, Representative of AICS Regional Office Rome, Italy, Head of AICS Pakistan and Afghanistan, Coordinator, Agriculture and Environment AICS Pakistan and Advisor AICS Pakistan. The AICS delegation visiting GB,

held a meeting with worthy Chief Secretary, Gilgit-Baltistan, Programme Coordinator ETI-GB/Secretary Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries, Secretary Forest Gilgit-Baltistan and stakeholders. During the meeting, ETI-GB interventions and future prospects for sustainable agriculture and value chain development with the support of AICS were discussed in detail.

The delegation visited ETI-GB supported projects like, Dairy Milk Processing Centre at Danyore, Gilgit, Minapin village agriculture cooperative, District Cooperative Network of Nagar - a representative body of 15 VACs of District Nagar including three women specific business cooperatives.

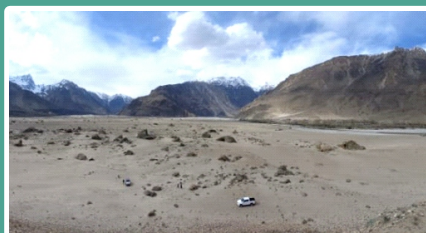


MoU signing with Line Departments for Extension Phase: Subsequent to the approval of programme extension, the programme signed MoUs with line departments; Agriculture Extension, Research and GB-Cooperative Departments for the implementation of programme activities during the extension phase.

Visit of IFAD's New Country Director Pakistan: After retirement of Mr. Hubert Boirard (Ex- Country Director Pakistan, Iran, Mongolia), Mr. Arnoud Hameleers visited ETI-GB after resuming his duties of Country Director. During his visit (from March 31- 2nd April 2023), the Country Director visited ETI-GB's infrastructure and value chain interventions in Diamer and Gilgit. The visiting team also met with GBRSP management to discuss the areas of collaboration in strengthening and sustainability of VACs. Also, the team visited the Chief Minister Office and held a detail meeting with Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan. Additional Chief Secretary, Gilgit-Baltistan and management of ETI-GB also attended the meeting. IFAD expressed its commitment to continue their support and partnership with the government for the agriculture development of the region.



Initiation of Infrastructure Development Schemes in Leftover Districts: Subsequent to the approval of three years programme extension in September 2022 and expansion of component-I to the entire region, during second and third quarter of the FY 2022/23, the programme team remained engaged in overall review, planning and readjustment of implementation approaches. Moreover, announcements were made to seek applications for Irrigation and Land Development (ILD) and Farm to Market Roads (FMR) from farming communities as per the set procedures and criteria. The applications were screened, and survey, designs and cost estimation of selected schemes were initiated during the quarter along with implementation of three ongoing schemes, land development and social mobilization.



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473
Applications
185 FMRs, 288 ILDs

152
Initial Feasibilities
52 FMRs, 100 ILDs

48
Detail Technical Assessments
23 FMRs, 25 ILDs

13
Ready to Implement
7 FMRs, 6 ILDs

Region	Total Applications	Schemes	Command Area	Households	Cost (Million)
Baltistan	122	3	1,761	1,015	209.3
Diامر	50	1	2,516	1,000	140.5
Gilgit	116	2	1,885	481	174.4
Grand Total	288	6	6,162	2,496	524.2

Farm to Market Roads (FMR):

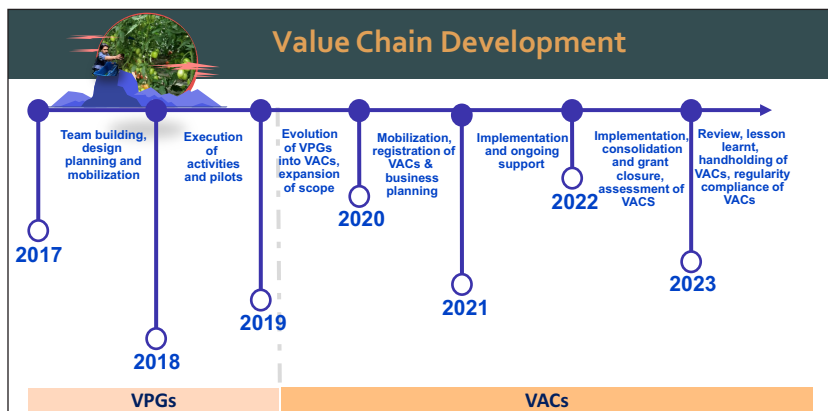
Region	Total Applications	FMR Schemes	Km	Households	Cost (Million)
Baltistan	39	2	9.53	319	76.4
Diامر	76	3	13.51	319	124.5
Gilgit	70	2	2.43	705	25.1
Grand Total	185	7	25.47	1343	226

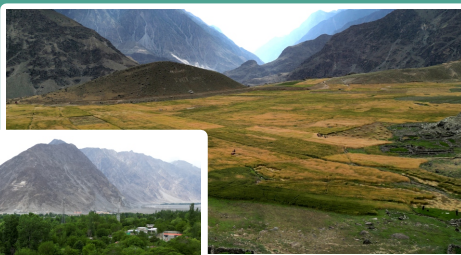
Conversion of Barren Lands into Productive Fields-

Land Development, Cultivation and Payback: Overall over 20% (8,330 acres) of the total command area of 42,673 acres was reported as the total land developed where agriculture activities have been initiated. With the onset of cultivation season particularly in low lying areas particularly in Diامر, community started land development activities as the result of continuous social mobilization. The social mobilization team is closely working with the communities and line departments for technical assistance and provision of plants, seeds, and other inputs to beneficiary communities to develop their lands as per their land development plans for the year. Moreover, the reports show that over PKR. 14.5 million have been collected as payback amount in 22 ILD schemes while in remaining schemes, payback is yet to be started.



Support Services for Value Chain Development- Regulatory Oversight and Supervision of Village Agriculture Cooperatives: In addition to provision of technical and financial assistance to farmers organized under informal farmers' organizations and village producers' groups in the initial years of the programme, over 40,000 farmers were organized under 162 Village Agriculture Cooperatives (VAC) – legally registered farmers' business entities with an average 250 memberships. Later the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the programme, the programme decided to establish and registered village level business cooperatives having large memberships with a proper structure functioning under regulations with proper regulatory oversight essential for accountability and sustainability. All these VACs are registered with the Cooperative Department, Gilgit-Baltistan and functioning under the Cooperative Act 1925.





Plantation and Wheat Seed Distribution Drives:

In collaboration with the Department of Agriculture Extension, Ghanche and Department of Forest, Baltistan 2,000 fruit plants were distributed by the Agriculture Department and 2,500 non-fruit plants by the Forest Department, a total of 4,500 saplings in a single day were planted on the new land of Aradus Thugus Ganche. The Scheme offering a command area of 900 acres i.e., 7,200 kanals benefitting 296 households.

Similarly, with the support of Agriculture Extension Diamer, a total of 160 bags (50kg each) of certified wheat seed were provided to the beneficiary communities of Suttdass Diamer which is another ILD Scheme of ETI-GB in Diamer with a total command area of 2,200 acres and 718 beneficiary households. It is expected that this seed multiplication intervention will enable the department to obtain improved seed for further multiplication with progressive beneficiary communities of ETI-GB. The Department of Agriculture, Diamer plans to distribute hybrid seeds of maize at subsidized rates to the beneficiaries of The Sut Daas Irrigation and Land Development Scheme ETI-GB so that the landowners could cultivate maize as a second crop immediately after the wheat harvest this year.

Overall, as per reports, over 14,200 fruit and other plants were distributed among beneficiary communities through Agriculture Extension and Forest departments under various programmes. Agriculture Extension Department has also provided over 10,500kg improved wheat seeds to various Village Agriculture Cooperatives (VACs) and beneficiary communities of ILDs.

VACs were financially and technically supported around financially viable business plans supporting farmers to increase their income. Through matching grant model various off-farm, on-farm, non-farm, and service improvement grants were provided to enhance production and productivity, reduction of pre- and post-harvest losses, market linkages and collective marketing. Moreover, farmers were provided extension services and office management support to ensure implementation of activities of business plans. Apricot, cherry, apple, nuts, vertical farming interventions for vegetable productions like cucumber, tomato and capsicum were among the agri commodities selected by VACs under business plans.

After completion of a complete agriculture campaign by the VACs, the programme conducted an overall assessment of to assess the functionality and management of the office, implementation of business activities, participation of farmers, production, sale, and income/revenue generated by the VACs. As per the VAC assessment conducted by the programme, reports of DC-GB and IFAD-AICS joint Mission, the programme interventions have been successful in terms of productivity enhancement, access to financial services and markets, resulting in increased incomes of farmers. However, challenges remain in the functioning and management of VACs including record keeping, financial management, regulatory compliances and recovery of revolving fund which is critical for the sustainability of VACs.

To ensure the sustainability and fulfilment of the regulatory requirements, Cooperative Department GB remained actively engaged with the programme to renew the registration, conduct annual general body meetings (AGMs) and Audit of the cooperatives. During the reporting period, the department conducted 82 Audits and 41 AGM along with monitoring and support on financial management and overall functioning of the cooperatives.

Visit of a Delegation of State Bank of Pakistan and other Commercial Banks to ETI-GB Interventions: A delegation of the State Bank of Pakistan visited Gilgit-Baltistan and attended a two-days Agri-Mela Gilgit-Baltistan held at KIU Gilgit from 2-3 March 2023. The officials coordinated with the programme its interventions, implementation models and challenges of farmers in acquiring agriculture financing facilities. ETI-GB is a member of Regional Agriculture Coordination Committee for GB- a regional working group for creating awareness among key actors of agriculture sector of Gilgit-Baltistan. The Programme Coordinator ETI-GB attended the inaugural session of the agri-mela while ETI-GB funded 4P projects and VACs participated in the event and displayed their products.

The Deputy Programme Coordinator, ETI-GB presented ETI-GB and its interventions in the workshop held at Musharraf Hall KIU and discussed the cooperative model and support modalities extended to cooperatives. The representatives of regional farmers' network, district networks and VACs also attended the workshop and shared their challenges facing in acquiring financial facilities offered by the commercial banks. The delegation also visited programme interventions- Milk processing center Danyore, VAC Chikas and discussed financing needs and challenges of farmers in accessing finances.

Meeting of State Bank of Pakistan Officials with Regional Farmers Network: On 4th March 2023, ETI-GB facilitated a meeting of SBP Officials with Regional Farmers Network at PCU. The members of network discussed their challenges of bank account opening process, accessibility issues, awareness and knowledge about products offered by commercial banks and other documentary processes. The Lead Value Chain section also shared the experience of ETI-GB and presented recommendations to improve the financing facilities to facilitate small rural farmers of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Agri-Financing to Rural Farmers and Support of Commercial Banks in Gilgit-Baltistan: On 6th March 2023, PC, ETI-GB chaired a meeting with the reps of commercial banks functioning in Gilgit-Baltistan on Agri-financing and support to small holders of GB. PC, ETI-GB discussed financing needs and issues of farmers in accessing financing facilities from the commercial banks. He gave emphasis to enabling measures and support of commercial banks to make the financing processes convenient to rural farmers in accessing various facilities offered by the commercial banks.

Social Mobilization: During this quarter, the social mobilization team of ETI-GB conducted various meetings with beneficiary farmers in all ten districts of Gilgit-Baltistan around ILD, FMRs and Value Chain activities. In the initially four prioritized districts the major emphasis of mobilization and community interaction was timely completion of ongoing schemes, land development and payback/revolving fund collection while with the extension of the programme the team with existing strength is concurrently engaged in initial social mobilization, detail mobilization, formation of SMTs/VACs communicating the terms and conditions of the programme for execution of schemes. It is to note that these activities were previously being carried out through engagement of social mobilization partner for four districts.





Gender, Youth & Poverty:

- Poverty Assessment exercise has been completed in 74 ILD schemes with a purpose to identify poor beneficiary households which will be exempted from the payback. A total of 2,350 beneficiary households have been identified (8.36%) as Poorest Households in all these schemes.
- Gender and Poverty Section conducted field visits to District, Gilgit, Nagar, and Hunza and submitted a field report "Women are the Priority; Hardships Faced in Rural Areas". In the report issues related to women VACs like access to finance, marketing of the products, and future planning of the VACs are highlighted for further sharing to relevant sections and discussion for any action.
- On International Women's Day (8th March 2023) IFAD published ETI-GB women specific success story "**From tulips to tomatoes: Technology empowers women in Asia**". The story is available on <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/from-tulips-to-tomatoes-technology-empowers-women-in-asia>
- The programme provided employment opportunities to unemployed youth, skilled and unskilled labour (estimated 4,000 each year in the construction activities), over 150 technical engineering consultants for supervision of construction work, 316 graduates in VAC offices.
- Moreover, in VACs, 30% memberships are of women with 27% youth (both men and women) while 15 VACs are entirely women owned, run and managed. In addition, over 315 women are also members of decision making bodies such as BODs, SMTs etc.

Extension Support and Handholding of VACs: The department continued provision of extension support and technical assistance to farmers at the onset of agriculture season in the region. During the quarter, the extension staff visited VACs and assessed the needs of the farmers. Based on the assessment, the staff continued support to farmers on horticulture activities particularly on tomato and cucumber crop- from preparation of beds, seed sowing, and tunnel management. In this regard, the extension staff started working with VACs to develop workplans of VACs keeping the crop management cycle in view for on-going support during the entire crop management cycle. Also, the value chain section started conducting district level consultation meetings with VAC bodies to ascertain their challenges and needs. Accordingly, the department will develop plans for the rollout of their capacity building and extension support programmes.

OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS (2016-2022)

Economic Infrastructure Development



42,673 Acres
Command Area



444 KM
Channel Length



384 KM
Road Length



191 Meter
RCC Bridges

40,288
Households

Value Chain Development



162 VACs



35+ Partnership
20+ Agri Commodities



513 Orchards
39 Nurseries



50,256 Farmers
(30% Women)