

ANNUAL REPORT **PAKISTAN**
2024



ISLAMABAD OFFICE



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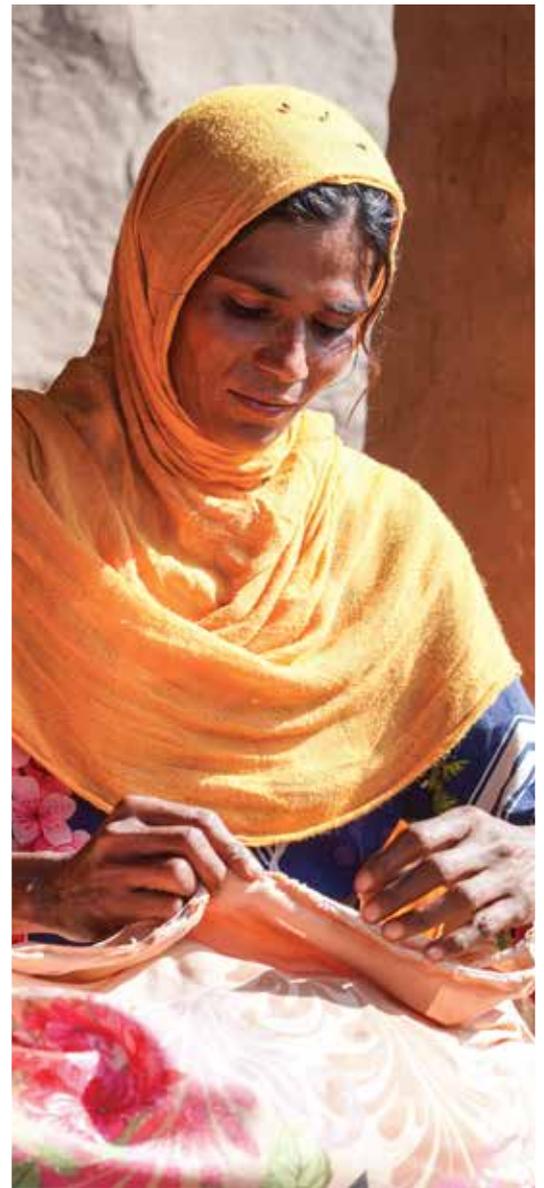
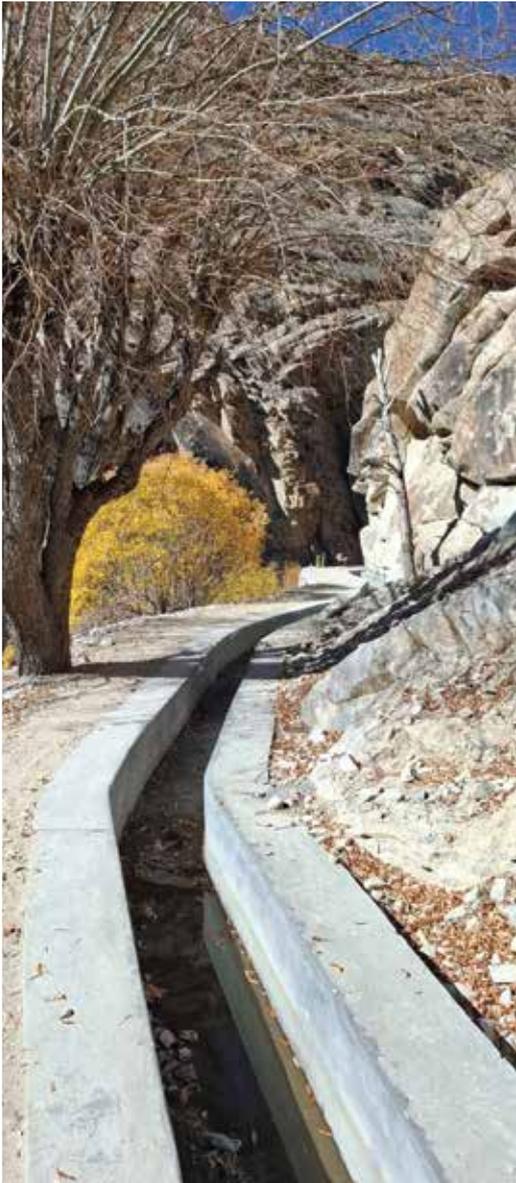


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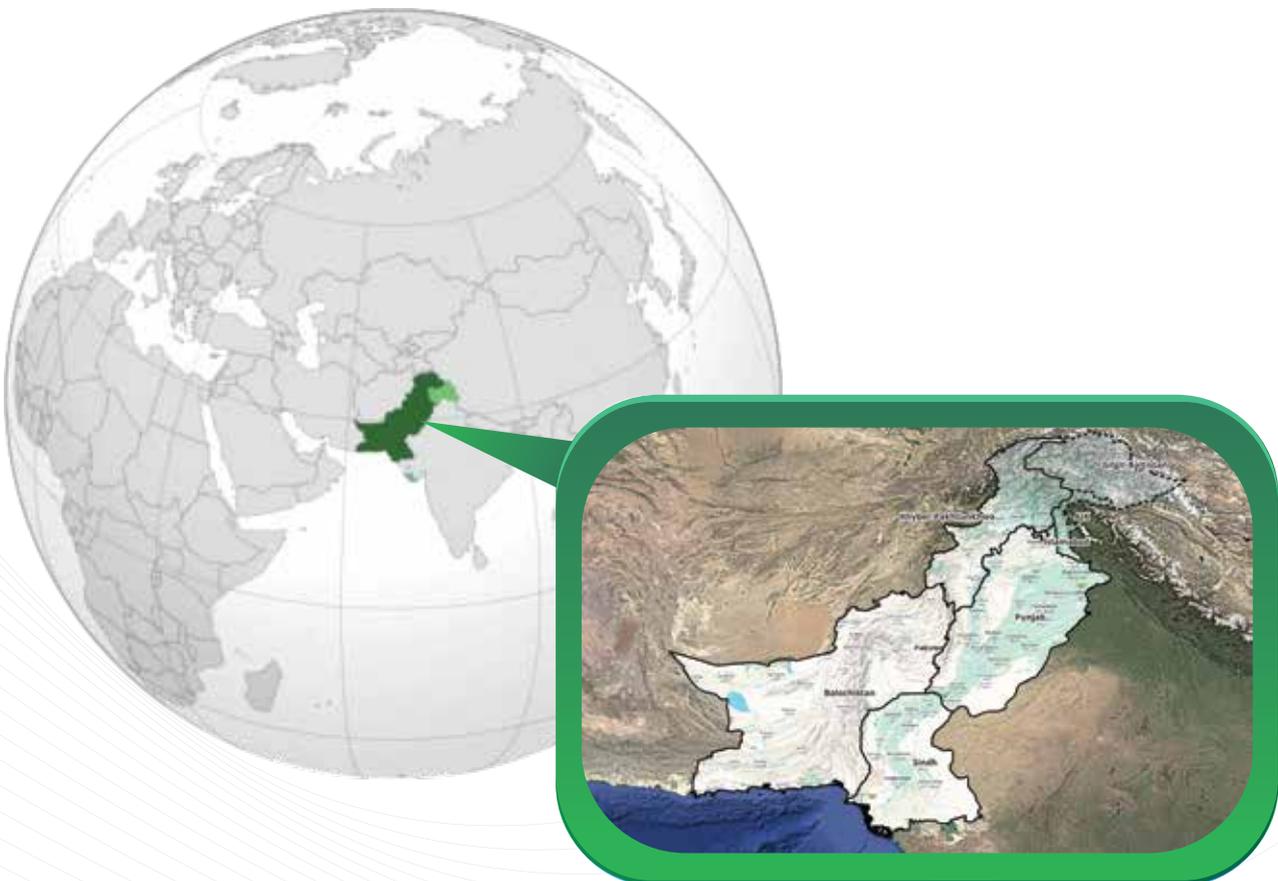
1 - GEO-POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Pakistan, located in South Asia, spans an area of over 800,000 square kilometers, nearly three times the size of Italy. To the south, it is bordered by the **Arabian Sea**, with a coastline extending approximately 1,000 kilometers. The country shares its eastern border with India, its western border with Iran and Afghanistan, and its northern border with China.

The primary watercourse of Pakistan is the **Indus River**, which flows through nearly the entire length of the country, passing through all provinces except Balochistan. The majority of the population resides along the Indus River and its tributaries.

The northern territories of Pakistan are home to some of the **world's highest peaks**, including K2 in Gilgit-Baltistan. This region generally experiences higher levels of precipitation compared to the southern areas and is characterized by a **temperate climate**, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. In the southeast, along the border with India, lies the **Cholistan Desert**, while the central-western region of Balochistan is dominated by a vast desert plateau. The remainder of the country is primarily covered by the fertile plains in Punjab and in parts of Sindh.

Pakistan was established as an Islamic Republic after the partition of British India on August 14, 1947. It is a **multiethnic and multicultural nation** with historical ties to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, as well as influences from various civilizations, including those of Alexander the Great, Gandharan, and the Mughal Empire. Since independence, Pakistan has worked to address various challenges through constitutional reforms. After the secession of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1971, the country adopted its third Constitution in 1973, which has been amended several times. Notably, the 18th Amendment in 2010 redefined the **federal structure** and shifted some administrative and sectoral responsibilities to the provinces.





2- ITALIAN COOPERATION IN PAKISTAN: A HISTORY OF PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ENGAGEMENT

Italian cooperation in Pakistan has a long history of commitment to sustainable development, poverty reduction, and improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable communities.

The first initiatives date back to the 1980s, focusing on **rural development** projects aimed at agricultural mechanization and improving crop quality, particularly in olive cultivation. The introduction of selected varieties of Italian olive cultivations has been instrumental in enhancing production efficiency and adapting it to Pakistan's climate. This initiative continues to be promoted in value chain development projects.

However, Italy's support for Pakistan has even deeper roots. In 1955, at the initiative of the last Wali Moghul of the Independent State of Swat, Professor Giuseppe Tucci founded the **Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan**. Co-managed by the International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies (ISMEO) and Ca' Foscari University, and supported by the Italian government, the efforts have played a pivotal role in the excavation, restoration, and study of Gandharan art, as well as in the analysis of settlements, funerary archaeology (from prehistory to the Islamic period), and rock art, producing over 1,500 publications. At the same time, Italy has made a significant contribution to

the **study of glaciers in the Himalayas, Karakoram, and Hindu Kush**, particularly those accessible from Pakistan. The 1954 K2 expedition, led by Ardito Desio, initiated geological and glaciological research, which was later expanded with the establishment of Ev-K2-CNR in 1989—an association and research center dedicated to climate change and high-altitude environmental studies. The association has also developed and continues to implement projects aimed at preserving and supporting the mountain ecosystem.

Italy's expertise in archaeology and glaciology has also played a key role within the framework of the Italy-Pakistan Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSA), contributing to two of the 48 projects financed under this initiative.

As part of the Archaeology Community Tourism (ACT) project, implemented by ISMEO, significant **efforts have been made to conserve and restore cultural heritage. These include the restoration of the Buddha of Jahanabad, the rehabilitation of the ancient city of Barikot (1700 BCE-1000 CE), the restoration of the Shahi Vishnuite Buddhist temple (670-690 CE), and the reconstruction of the Swat Archaeological Museum**, which was destroyed by the 2005 earthquake and subsequent attacks in 2008.

Photo Credits: IUCN



The Socio-economic and Environmental Development (SEED) project, carried out by Ev-K2-CNR, has played a key role in the **establishment of national parks, including the Central Karakoram National Park**. This initiative has enhanced park management, strengthened environmental conservation efforts, and fostered new economic opportunities for local communities by integrating scientific research, environmental protection, and socio-economic development.

Italy has also made a significant contribution to **emergency response efforts in Pakistan**, providing critical support for reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. In 2006, the Italian Cooperation built schools and healthcare facilities in the areas most affected by the 2005 earthquake. Similarly, in 2011–2012, it provided essential aid to communities impacted by the 2010 floods.

Since the establishment of the **Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) in 2016**, Italy's development cooperation has been aligned with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable development across key sectors, including **education, healthcare, gender equality, natural resource management, and the preservation of cultural heritage**.

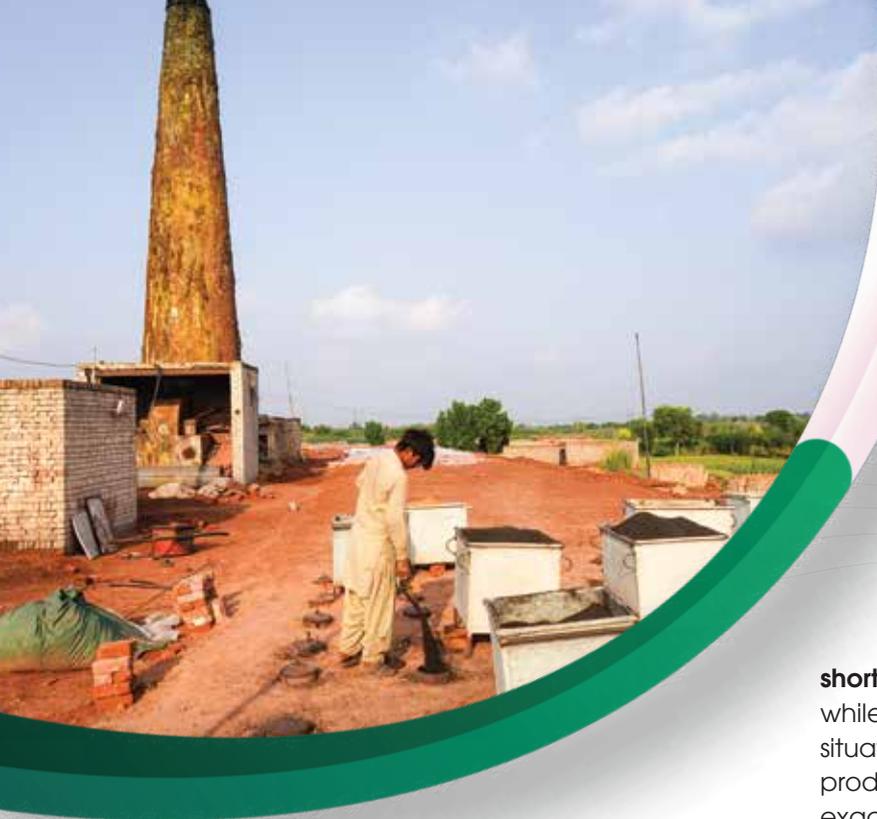
Additionally, two Italian civil society organizations are active in Pakistan: CESVI and ISCOS.

CESVI Fondazione - ETS, active since 2005, focuses on disaster risk management, community resilience, and sustainable development, also providing aid to populations affected by emergencies, such as the 2022 floods.

The **Trade Union Institute for Development Cooperation (ISCOS)**, present for over 20 years, operates primarily in vocational training, the protection of workers' and women's rights, and the fight against child labor.

3- ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OUTLOOK

With a growing population of 247 million (World Bank, 2023), Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world. It is the 45th largest economy in terms of GDP (World Bank, 2023), approximating to US\$375 billion (IMF, 2023). According to the World Bank, in 2024 the economy of Pakistan showed signs of stabilization after the crisis that in 2023, following the impact of the 2022 floods, led the country one step away from default, bringing the GDP growth rate back to around 2.5%. The new government, which took office in spring 2024, has launched a series of tax reforms aimed at **controlling inflation**. These reforms have helped to reach an agreement with the IMF, which has materialised in a plan loan of USD 7 billion, the Extended Fund Facility (EFF), aimed at consolidating economic stabilisation processes and supporting structural reforms. However, the macroeconomic risks remain high, in particular because of financial needs, low foreign exchange reserves and **high public debt costs**, which reached 67.4 % of the GDP in June 2024.



Among the main sectors of the economy, services account for the largest share of GDP, contributing over 50%. This is followed by agriculture and industry, each contributing between 20% and 25%¹. Of these, **agriculture** saw the most significant growth, with an increase of about 6.5% compared to 2023. This sector **accounts for approximately 70% of the country's exports** and provides employment for nearly 40% of the workforce (FAO, 2023), of which about 66% are women (World Bank, 2025).

Although the signs of recovery continue following the catastrophic floods of 2022 that flooded about 30% of the country, **in 2024 poverty increased again**, affecting millions of people mainly in rural areas, where about 60% of the population lives. This figure is also reflected in the **worsening of the Human Development Index**. The latest 2024 UNDP report ranks Pakistan at 164th place from among 193 countries, a decline from 161st place in 2022². Moreover, the report states that in 2024, 93 million people were in multidimensional poverty³, a situation aggravated by structural problems that limit access to essential resources and services.

In the most vulnerable districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces⁴, approximately 11 million people face high levels of food insecurity. Among them, 1.7 million live in emergency conditions marked by **severe food**

shortages and high levels of acute malnutrition, while about 9.3 million are in a crisis situation. This situation highlights the deep weaknesses in food production and distribution systems, further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, rural poverty, and limited access to adequate healthcare.

At the same time, **inadequate water and sanitation services** impact 6 million people, heightening the risk of disease. Additionally, 13.5 million people, including 6.3 million children, require social protection to prevent **exploitation and economic vulnerability** (OCHA, 2024). Education continues to be a significant obstacle to the country's development. **26 million children are out of school** and the literacy rate among children over 10 is 61% (UNESCO, 2024).

The health system is another indicator of the country's structural difficulties. WHO ranked Pakistan **124th out of 169 for quality of health care**, with inadequate services and severely limited access in rural areas (WHO, 2024).

In addition, the migration dynamics of Pakistan are characterized by significant emigration and immigration flows. **Remittances by Pakistani workers** abroad represent an important economic resource, reaching 20.8 billion dollars between July 2024 and January 2025, an increase of 31.7% compared to the 15.8 billion dollars of the previous year (World Bank, 2025). It is also to be noted that Pakistan has in recent years witnessed **an increase in the number of Afghan refugees**, since August 2021. This influx poses complex challenges in terms of access to services, resource management and socio-economic integration.

¹Pakistan Economic Survey 2023-2024. Ministry of Finance

²Human Development Report 2023-2024, UNDP

³Global Multidimensional poverty index 2024, UNDP. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) measures deprivation in three dimensions: health, education and living standards, using 15 specific indicators.

⁴Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 2025. IPC analysis was conducted in 68 vulnerable rural districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces between November 2024 and March 2025.

Photo Credits: ILO



3.1- CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

In order to promote sustainable development, Pakistan faces structural challenges that limit economic growth and the well-being of its population. Low productivity and poor diversification especially in the agricultural sector, aggravated by inefficient practices and inadequate capacity, undermine the country's ability to respond to the dynamics of the global economy and the growing impact of climate change. This is being compounded by the rapid depletion of forest and water resources. The World Bank has placed Pakistan **among the 10 most vulnerable countries to climate change**, with increasingly frequent extreme events that increase food insecurity and economic fragility.

This is because **agriculture is being hampered by backward production systems**, poor mechanisation and inefficient management of natural resources. With just 4% (World Bank, 2024) of the area covered by forests and an inefficient irrigation system that results in water losses of up to 25%, **the sustainability of natural resources is increasingly compromised**. Overexploitation of forest resources, due to illegal logging, land conversion for agriculture and the use of wood as a major source of domestic energy, accelerates environmental degradation and soil erosion. Lack of sustainable forest management also undermines the livelihoods of rural communities.

Reduced job opportunities amplify these vulnerabilities, with a labour market characterised by underemployment and a high incidence of informal employment. Access to stable and decent jobs remains limited, particularly for young people and women, who face structural barriers related to low skills, limited training and socio-cultural obstacles.

In light of these challenges, there is a pressing need to promote sustainable growth that enhances Pakistan's natural, agricultural, and human resources. It is crucial to invest in **resilient agricultural practices and nature-based solutions** to enhance productivity and quality, while also expanding access to international markets. The sustainable management of water and forest resources must be enhanced to combat environmental degradation and **secure livelihoods for rural communities**. Simultaneously, expanding employment opportunities through vocational training, skills development, and equitable access to the labor market—particularly for youth and women—is essential. Furthermore, preserving and promoting Pakistan's **rich cultural heritage serves as a key driver of economic development** and social inclusion.



4- STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

To address the challenges enumerated, AICS Islamabad office has defined a targeted strategic approach focused on **food security**, climate resilience, decent work, and cultural heritage valorization. Strengthening food security aims to tackle vulnerabilities in the agricultural sector and the link between nutrition and health, while **climate change adaptation** is crucial to reducing risks and mitigating the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change. **Promoting employment** and vocational training seeks to reduce unemployment and informality, whereas **valorization of cultural heritage supports** economic diversification and sustainable growth by leveraging the country's existing resources.

AICS Islamabad office's strategic framework aligns with the 2024-2026 Three-Year Programming and Policy Document for Development Cooperation and is grounded in the Theory of Change (ToC) of AICS, which integrates the SDGs across five thematic pillars: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. Within this framework, AICS Islamabad has identified four strategic intervention outcomes, focusing on three key pillars: **People, Planet and Prosperity**.

PILLAR-PERSON

- **Outcome 1 (SDG 2):** Food security is ensured, and resilient, sustainable agri-food production systems are supported, promoting the link between nutrition and health.
- **Sector:** Rural development and food security.

PILLAR-PLANET

- **Outcome 2 (SDG 13.1):** Strengthened resilience and adaptation to climate risks and natural disasters.
- **Sector:** Environment and climate change, risk reduction

PILLAR-PROSPERITY

- **Outcome 3 (SDG 8.5):** Promote full and productive employment and decent work, with particular emphasis on young people and women.
- **Sector:** Education, training and decent work
- **Outcome 4 (SDG 8.9 – 11.4):** Increased protection of cultural and natural heritage.
- **Sector:** Safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage

Photo Credits: CESVI



4.1 INSTITUTIONAL ALIGNMENT AND COORDINATION

AICS's engagement in Pakistan is in line with the **strategic priorities of both the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations Country Programme** - Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027. Pakistan has shown a strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda, incorporating the SDGs into its National Development Plan as early as 2016. This commitment was further strengthened with the recent launch of the Uraan Pakistan Programme (2024-2029). AICS Islamabad supports this vision by contributing to the implementation of the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2023-2030, the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (2023), and, in alignment with these initiatives, the National Food Security Policy (2018).

AICS also has its strategic priorities in line with the **European Union's objectives**, particularly the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027. Moreover, AICS Islamabad actively participates in the Team Europe Initiative (TEI), implementing two of its flagship projects. The office operates in line with the expected outcomes of the World Bank's recent Country Partnership Framework (FY26-FY35), which outlines Pakistan's key priorities for sustainable economic development and climate vulnerability reduction.

Coordination with Pakistani institutions and development partners is central to Italy's development cooperation efforts. Dialogue with the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) ensures alignment with government strategies and aid coordination through the quarterly Portfolio Review, which supports the monitoring and planning of development interventions.

AICS Islamabad Office actively participates in **key donor and international coordination mechanisms**, including the EU Development Counsellors Meeting, the Development Partners Group chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator Office (UNRCO), and the Donors Coordination Committee led by the EAD. Furthermore, engagement in thematic forums—such as the Water Donor Coordination Committee, chaired by the Asian Development Bank, and the Climate Change Donors Coordination Committee, led by the World Bank—further strengthens synergy with other development partners.

The office also conducts **regular consultations with local authorities and provincial representatives of line ministries** to ensure the effective design, formulation, and coordination of initiatives. In parallel, field monitoring visits are carried out in intervention areas, facilitating direct engagement with local communities to assess project progress and quality.

5- EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENTS: 2024 AT A GLANCE



JANUARY

Community consultation in the mountain regions



FEBRUARY

AICS projects 'OliveCulture' and 'Glaciers & Students' presented at Euro Village 2024 event



MARCH

Focus group Lab for Integrated Water Resources Management and Sustainable Agriculture



APRIL

Meeting with the Federal Minister of Economic Affairs to renew support in the management of natural resources



MAY

Presentation of the final evaluation study of the Programme for Poverty Reduction



JUNE

Agreement signed for the project "Water for Development"



JULY

Seminar on Italian Commitment to Biodiversity along with Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination"



AUGUST

Meeting with provincial authorities in Sindh for the project "Resilience and Adaptation Promoting Proactive Actions (RAFAA)"



SEPTEMBER

Kick-off meeting for the project "Radio Education"



OCTOBER

Meeting with Pakistan's Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research



NOVEMBER

Press conference for the presentation of Pakistan's glacier inventory



DECEMBER

Meeting with the Ministry of Economic Affairs for the presentation of the Portfolio



6- PILLAR-PERSON

Photo Credits: CESVI



6. RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

6.1 SECTORAL CONTEXT

Rural development in Pakistan plays a crucial role in the country's overall economic growth and sustainable development.

Pakistan is home to one of the world's largest irrigation systems, the Indus Basin Irrigation System, which is vital for the agricultural sector. Fed by the multiple rivers, it distributes water through an extensive network of dams, canals, and barrages, enabling the cultivation of millions of hectares. However, increasing water demand—driven by industrial and domestic consumption—and aging infrastructure pose significant challenges to its sustainability and efficiency.

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy and employment, primarily relying on monoculture crops such as **cotton, sugarcane, rice, maize, and wheat**. Over the past year, production in these sectors has **increased by over 16%**, compared to an overall crop growth rate of 11%.

Among alternative crops, **olive cultivation has gained significant interest**, both as a means to diversify oil consumption away from seed-based oils and to develop high-value-added products, reducing dependency on edible oil imports. The area under olive cultivation is expanding steadily, supported by grafting wild olive trees and advancements in nursery production.

In 2022, Pakistan's olive oil production was estimated at 110 tons, while imports reached 2,400 tons, indicating strong domestic demand. However, only 15% of the total cultivated olive area is currently productive, mainly due to the young age of the trees, which have yet to reach full production capacity.

Despite these developments, **gaps persist along the value chain**, particularly in cultivation practices, processing, marketing, and commercialization.

A promising sign is the growth of olive oil processing facilities, which have increased from a single unit in 2012 to 26 in 2022, reflecting growing investment in the sector.

Additionally, **the livestock sector** is a key pillar of Pakistan's rural economy, **providing employment for over 30 million people**. The country has 57.5 million large ruminants, including 46.3 million buffaloes. Dairy animals produce 54.4 million tons of milk annually, with buffaloes contributing 62% of the total output.

Punjab, the heart of Pakistan's dairy sector, **accounts for 58% of national milk production** (Punjab Board of Investment and Trade, 2024). Despite being among the top five global milk producers, the sector faces structural challenges: only 5-7% of milk is processed by the formal industry, while the rest is sold as raw milk. The lack of adequate storage and cold chain infrastructure leads to a 15% production loss, limiting milk availability even among higher-income households.

In both agriculture and livestock farming, access to rural credit remains a major barrier to sectoral development. To address this challenge, the State Bank of Pakistan has increased agricultural funding by 25% compared to the previous year, allocating PKR 2,216 billion (approximately €7.56 billion). At the provincial level, targeted programs have been introduced to facilitate credit access for small and medium-scale producers, including zero-interest loans, with a particular focus on the dairy sector.

Photo Credits: AICS

6.2 NEED ASSESSMENT

The sector analysis highlights, beyond the need for improved credit access, the urgency of **enhancing water management** through more efficient irrigation techniques, sustainable use of groundwater resources, and the implementation of irrigation governance reforms.

Innovating the agricultural sector to make it more efficient and diversified is crucial to ensuring a stable food supply, supporting industry, meeting domestic demand, and expanding exports. At the same time, support measures are needed to protect the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Promotion of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices is essential to improving production quality, increasing resilience, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

However, sectoral development is hindered by outdated practices, inadequate infrastructure, and limited market access. Overcoming these challenges will require **strengthening support for local institutions, fostering private sector engagement** across value chains, and **enhancing vocational training**.

6.3 APPROACH

AICS activities in Pakistan in the field of **rural development and food security** aim to strengthen the resilience of rural communities and the most vulnerable groups. The approach focuses on **enhancing value chains and improving both the quality and quantity of production** through interventions in training, research, certification, awareness-raising, promotion, and marketing of both staple and high-value-added products.



The goal is to ensure food security and support sustainable agri-food systems by integrating the link between nutrition and health, in alignment with SDG 2 – Zero Hunger.

In the provinces of **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Punjab**, where environmental conditions are most favorable, **efforts are directed towards strengthening the olive value chain**. This includes a focus on production quality and sustainability through improved technical and managerial skills and more efficient resource use. High-quality raw materials serve as the foundation for better market access, supported by effective marketing strategies.

In **Gilgit-Baltistan**, initiatives aim to improve incomes and reduce poverty and malnutrition in rural areas through **economic transformation programmes**. Particular emphasis is placed on developing sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing rural road networks and small-scale irrigation systems to promote inclusive growth.

Strengthening professional capacities in the agricultural sector is a key element for sustainable development. Through targeted **education and technical training programmes**, efforts focus on improving agricultural and environmental skills, aligning them with the country's growth strategies.



7- PILLAR-PLANET

Photo Credits: AICS



7. ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND RISK REDUCTION

7.1 SECTORAL CONTEXT

Pakistan is among the most vulnerable countries to climate change, increasingly affected by extreme events such as **floods and droughts**. In the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024, Pakistan ranks 179th out of 180 countries, confirming an alarming environmental performance.

The 2022 floods contaminated soil and water resources, reducing soil fertility and threatening the food security of millions of people. **Habitat loss and soil erosion have aggravated environmental degradation**, affecting biodiversity. The combined impact of these extreme weather events is significant. World Bank estimates that environmental degradation and pollution will lead to a 18-20% reduction in Pakistan's GDP by 2050 (World Bank, 2022).

The country is exposed to four categories of flooding: river (Indus basin), flash, glacial lake spill (GLOF) and coastal (cyclone). In particular, according to the INFORM 2025 Index for Risk Management (EU), The **risk of river flooding is among the highest in the world**, with a score of 9.5 out of 10, making Pakistan the sixth most at-risk country out of 191.

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation remains critical, especially in rural areas lacking adequate infrastructure. Contamination and inefficient management of water resources threaten public health. With a rising demographic trend, in the order of millions per year, and an estimated temperature increase of 3°C **by 2047**, **water demand is expected to grow by 60%** (World Bank, 2025).

Another significant issue is **poor air quality**, particularly in urban areas. In the second half of 2024, record levels of pollution were recorded, with cities like Multan experiencing PM 2.5 concentrations 190 times higher than the WHO's recommended limits. This has led to respiratory problems, especially among the most vulnerable groups, particularly children under five. The primary causes of this pollution include the burning of agricultural waste, as well as emissions from industries and vehicles.

7.2 NEED ASSESSMENT

The **balance between agriculture and water resources** is a critical challenge for Pakistan, particularly in the upper Indus basin, where 45% of water flow depends on glacier and snowmelt. To ensure sustainable management, it is **essential to develop integrated glaciological-hydrological models** to predict future water availability and establish effective water quality monitoring systems.

With the increasing demand for water, **improving irrigation efficiency** and optimizing water resource management are key priorities to ensure food security and strengthen the resilience of the agricultural sector.

To enhance the resilience of rural communities, the implementation of **anticipatory action systems** linked to multi-hazard early warning systems can significantly reduce economic and human losses.



To enhance the resilience of rural communities, the implementation of anticipatory action systems linked to multi-hazard early warning systems can significantly reduce economic and human losses. Complementary solutions, such as agricultural insurance and social protection measures, can help mitigate risks associated with extreme climate events.

Sustainable tourism and the development of alternative employment opportunities are key strategies for economic and environmental progress. Actively engaging communities — particularly women — in land management and the enhancement of natural resources is essential for improving household incomes. In this context, forest restoration and the development of resilient agri-food value chains play a central role, contributing to both economic and environmental sustainability.

Moreover, air pollution is an increasingly urgent challenge. The implementation of an effective monitoring network would help identify pollution sources and enable the **adoption of targeted measures to improve air quality** and public health

7.3 APPROACH

AICS Islamabad Office, in the field of climate change adaptation and risk reduction, aims to **strengthen the resilience of communities and institutions to climate risks and natural disasters**. It promotes ecosystem protection, sustainable natural resource management, and inclusive development models that improve the economic and social conditions of the most vulnerable groups.

Within the Planet pillar of AICS's Theory of Change (TOC), and through an integrated approach, AICS supports adaptation strategies and responsible management, contributing specifically to the achievement of SDG 13 (Climate Action), with a focus on Target 1: Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related risks and natural disasters.

In **Gilgit-Baltistan**, AICS has been working for over a decade to **promote the sustainable development of mountain areas** in collaboration with civil society organizations, institutions, and local authorities. Interventions focus on improving the management of natural resources, particularly water, and on ecosystem conservation.

Special attention is given to **ecotourism** as a driver of sustainable economic development, leveraging local natural and cultural heritage. **Women's participation** in land and resource management is also encouraged, fostering their active involvement in decision-making processes and economic activities. Additionally, support for research on mountain ecosystems enables the development of effective conservation strategies and sustainable development models compatible with the area's environmental fragility.

In **Sindh**, AICS activities aim to integrate anticipatory actions, **nature-based solutions, and climate-resilient agricultural practices**. Technical assistance plays a key role in strengthening local capacities in early warning systems, participatory planning, and inclusive governance, all of which are essential for ensuring financial sustainability through the mobilization of both domestic and international resources.

Photo Credits: CESVI



8- PILLAR-PROSPERITY

Photo Credits: University of Ca' Foscari Venice



8.1 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DECENT WORK

8.1.1 SECTORAL CONTEXT

Decent work, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is based on employment that ensures fair income, safe working environments, social protection, and respect for workers' rights. In Pakistan, achieving this goal remains a complex challenge, influenced by economic, social, and climatic factors, despite efforts by the Government and international organizations to **improve working conditions and promote formal employment**. **Unemployment remains high**, with a particularly critical situation for young people who face greater difficulties in accessing the labour market. Gender disparities are significant: women continue to face structural barriers due to cultural barriers and security problems, resulting in a much lower labour force participation than men (22.7% - World Bank, 2023). A recent analysis by the ILO - International Labour Organization shows that the **gender pay gap has reached 30% in the formal sector, and over 40% in the informal sector, ranking it among the highest in the world**.

The construction sector is heavily reliant on seasonal and migrant workers, as well as environmentally unsustainable practices. A particularly critical issue is the **brick industry**, which is essential for post-disaster reconstruction but **highly polluting**. Traditional fixed-chimney Bull's Trench Kilns (FCBTKs) are among the main sources of greenhouse gas and black carbon emissions, contributing to global warming and negatively impacting health and air quality.

Child labour still involves some 12.5 million children between the ages of 5 and 14, often employed in high-risk sectors such as brick kilns and agriculture⁵. Safety at work is Another critical issue: poor implementation of health and safety legislation leads to frequent accidents, especially in the textile and construction sectors; Women working in agriculture face hostile environments with a high risk of violence and harassment, compounded by socio-economic factors and lack of recognition awareness of their rights⁶.

Social protection in Pakistan is extremely limited: it is estimated that only 8% of workers have access to formal social security systems.

Despite constitutional protections, **minorities** tend to suffer discrimination in the world of work, with jobs often limited to informal and low-skilled sectors. Social barriers and prejudices limit access to public and well-paid jobs, compromising their economic and social security.

⁵Overview of the Economy, Finance Division, Government of Pakistan, 2024

⁶Protection Issues Faced by Women Farmers in Pakistan, FAO 2024



8.1.2 NEED ASSESSMENT

Youth and female employment remains one of the main challenges. Investing in vocational training, **certification of training programs**, and innovative tools such as the National Skill Passport can facilitate the recognition of skills and reduce reliance on precarious work.

Ensuring safer working conditions, especially in high-risk sectors such as construction and agriculture, requires an overall improvement of the regulatory environment to enable the effective implementation of existing labor laws, particularly through the expansion of inclusive social protection programs.

Finally, ensuring equal opportunities for religious minorities through anti-discrimination measures and dedicated education and training pathways can promote fairer integration into the labor market, contributing to greater social and economic inclusion.

8.1.3 APPROACH

To address these challenges, AICS Islamabad's interventions in the Education, Training, and Decent Work sector align with the objectives of the Prosperity pillar of AICS's TOC, contributing to the achievement of **SDG 8**, particularly target 8.5, which aims to ensure **full employment and decent working conditions for all, with a special focus on youth and women**.

The initiatives promoted enhance job quality, reduce inequalities in access to employment, and strengthen the capacities of local institutions, fostering more sustainable and inclusive development.

In **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**, actions focus on transitioning to a more **sustainable economy** by modernizing brick kilns to reduce environmental impact and improve working conditions. At the same time, **vocational training programs** and access to employment in **sustainable construction and ecotourism** sectors are being strengthened, with a specific focus on women and youth. These interventions develop specialized skills and professional certifications, increasing employment opportunities in growing industries.

In the **Punjab** province, the focus is on the socio-economic inclusion of the most vulnerable communities by ensuring greater access to vocational training and improving working conditions. Employment opportunities for youth and adults are being strengthened while simultaneously promoting an **environment conducive to dialogue** and social cohesion.



8.2 PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

8.2.1 SECTORAL CONTEXT

Pakistan boasts a **vast cultural heritage**, shaped by millennia of history and the influence of great civilizations. Since the 19th century, excavations and restoration efforts led by archaeologists and experts have renewed interest in the country's past, spanning from prehistory to Hindu, Greek, Gandharan, Islamic, Mughal, and colonial civilizations. Additionally, indigenous communities, as custodians of ancient traditions, further enrich the country's intangible heritage.

Since 1963, Pakistan has been a member of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and is currently serving on the UNESCO Executive Board for the 2023-2027 term. With **six UNESCO World Heritage sites** (and twenty-six on the tentative list), Pakistan holds vast potential in cultural, archaeological, and religious tourism. To enhance these resources, the National Tourism Coordination Board has established dedicated working groups to develop targeted strategies for each tourism sector. After the decline in tourism caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan recorded a significant increase in arrivals of foreign tourists in 2023, especially from Asia (+115% compared to 2022), marking a solid recovery (UNWTO, 2023).

In 2024 the sector contributed 6.1% of the national GDP, employing about 4.79 million people⁷. However, the country is **struggling to fully develop its tourism potential**: the lack of adequate infrastructure and services makes access to sites difficult and limits the experience of visitors; all this is added to a promotion and tourist offer ineffective.

Education plays a key role in safeguarding and enhancing cultural heritage, transmitting knowledge, skills and values that ensure its continuity and vitality. However, the level of education in the country is still low (53.46/100, District Education Performance Index 2023) and access remains highly unequal. The most disadvantaged areas are concentrated mainly in the provinces of Baluchistan and Sindh, where over half of the districts have the worst school performance.

Cultural heritage is being undermined by climate change, which is having a growing impact and putting not only archaeological sites and historic buildings but also the cultural traditions and practices of local communities at risk.

Floods in 2022 severely damaged 149 sites, causing losses of over PKR 13 billion (more than 14 million euro) and a significant impact on the tourism sector and employment⁸. **Earthquakes** also pose a constant threat to Pakistan due to being located in one of the most seismically active areas in the world. Over the past 10 years, the country has been hit by more than 2,400 earthquakes of magnitude 4 or greater, with an average of 243 seismic events per year⁹.

⁷Pakistan Tourism Barometer 2023-24, Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation

⁸ Pakistan Floods 2022: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives.

⁹ earthquakelist.org

Photo Credits: IUCN



The most devastating was the 2015 earthquake in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with a magnitude of 7.5, which destroyed and damaged infrastructure, public buildings and numerous archaeological sites.

In addition to material damage, **natural disasters compromise intangible cultural heritage**. Forced displacement and migration threaten the traditional linkages between people and the environment, putting at risk the social fabric of the affected communities and their cultural and identity-related livelihoods.

8.2.2 NEED ASSESSMENT

To ensure that both tangible and intangible cultural heritage contributes to sustainable development and the socio-economic well-being of communities, it is essential to adopt **integrated strategies** that guarantee its protection, conservation, enhancement, and promotion. These actions should involve active engagement from stakeholders through the adoption of efficient interinstitutional governance systems, as well as from local communities through the establishment of committees, organizations, and platforms.

At the same time, efforts should be made to **prevent territorial abandonment** by fostering sustainable economic growth within communities. This can be achieved by creating employment opportunities through the training of specialized personnel for excavation and conservation-restoration projects, developing ecotourism models by improving hospitality services, and providing financial support for entrepreneurship in the tourism sector. Additionally, **strengthening heritage protection from natural disasters** through preventive Disaster Risk Reduction measures is crucial.

Finally, improving educational offerings is fundamental to increasing inclusivity, promoting respect and appreciation for cultural heritage, and recognizing culture as a driver of sustainable development.

8.2.3 APPROACH

Cultural heritage is recognized as a key element of the Prosperity pillar in the 2030 Agenda, as it is considered a driver of economic growth to "ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives."

On this basis, to achieve Outcome 3 of the AICS Prosperity ToC - "Enhanced safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage for socio-economic well-being" (SDG 8.9-11.4), AICS Islamabad office adopts people-centred and living heritage approaches. These approaches guide **interventions aimed at protecting, conserving, and enhancing heritage** while strengthening community participation in governance systems for improved management of cultural heritage and archaeological sites.

Such approaches ensure the revitalization of heritage, making it a functional tool for improving the **sustainable tourism** offering as a lever for economic development. Furthermore, special attention is given to the quality of education through curriculum improvements, teacher training, and the strengthening of cultural awareness, also through the use of media, to contribute to **increasing school enrollment**.



9- HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Photo Credits: AICS

Humanitarian needs in Pakistan are primarily driven by **extreme weather events and complex migration dynamics**.

Currently, **the country hosts approximately 3.2 million Afghans**, nearly 76% of whom are women and children, mainly concentrated in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. This presence places significant pressure on host communities, making access to essential services—such as food, healthcare, and education—more challenging.

Moreover, uncertainty regarding the legal status of Afghans—since Pakistan has not ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees—and the repatriation plans initiated in October 2023 with the implementation of the **Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP)**, further complicate the situation.

According to the UNHCR, between October 2023 and early February 2024, more than **500,000 Afghans** were repatriated (UNHCR, 2025).

Within this framework, UNHCR and its partners have developed the **Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR)**. In the context of SSAR, AICS Islamabad participates in technical coordination mechanisms to respond to the humanitarian needs of Afghans in Pakistan.

In addition, AICS Islamabad maintains an observer role in the **Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)**.





10- GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (GEWE)

Photo Credits: UNESCO

Pakistan ranks 145th out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2024 of the World Economic Forum, highlighting **one of the most serious gender inequalities in the world**. This positioning reflects the structural barriers that limit women's and girls' access to education, work and justice.

Although gender equality is enshrined in the 1973 Constitution and recognised in policy planning documents, including Uraan-Pakistan 2025 with the Equity and Empowerment pillar, inequalities remain entrenched and widespread.

A cross-sectional analysis of the status of women shows that crises affecting the entire population have an even more drastic impact on women, girls and young girls. **Gender differences manifest themselves in food insecurity, limited access to health care, economic inequalities and low levels of female schooling.**

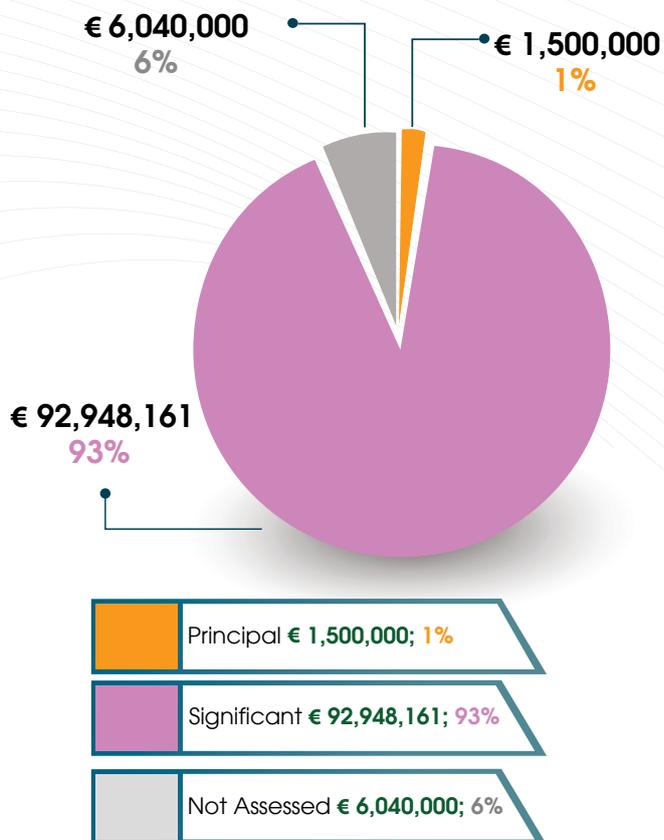
These vulnerabilities are compounded by forms of **gender-based violence**¹⁰ often due to archaic social dynamics¹¹.

In Pakistan's complex context, AICS recognizes the central role of women, girls, and young girls in sustainable development.

In line with the guidelines of AICS and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) 2020-2024, the Islamabad office integrates a gender perspective into funded initiatives through a **twin-track approach**. On one hand, AICS Islamabad supports targeted interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; on the other, it ensures that gender mainstreaming is effectively incorporated within initiatives with other sectoral focuses.

In interventions where gender equality is a significant objective, it is concretely implemented through expected outcomes, dedicated activities, and specific budget allocations. The criterion of traceability and measurement of the attention given in the interventions supported by AICS in favor of the GEWE is the **Gender Policy Marker**¹².

Allocation of funds for gender policy marker



In AICS Islamabad's 2024 portfolio, 13 out of 18 ongoing projects are marked with a **Gender Policy Marker 1**, indicating that gender equality is a significant objective. **These projects account for over €92 million**, representing 93% of the total funding. **Under the Prosperity pillar, one of our projects places gender equality at the core of its objectives:** "Girls' Education – Support for the Female Education Sector and Cultural Heritage Conservation through Education in Pakistan," implemented by UNESCO with a budget of €1.5 million.

This initiative aims to promote girls' education and reduce school dropout rates among marginalized communities. As a result, 8,934 girls from marginalized communities in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Gilgit-Baltistan have been enrolled in primary school.

¹⁰Almost 34% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence at least once in their lives. **Dashboard Data Analysis, UNFPA, 2024**

¹¹Pakistan has the 6th highest number of child brides in the world with almost 19 million a year. **National Report on the Status of Women in Pakistan, 2023**

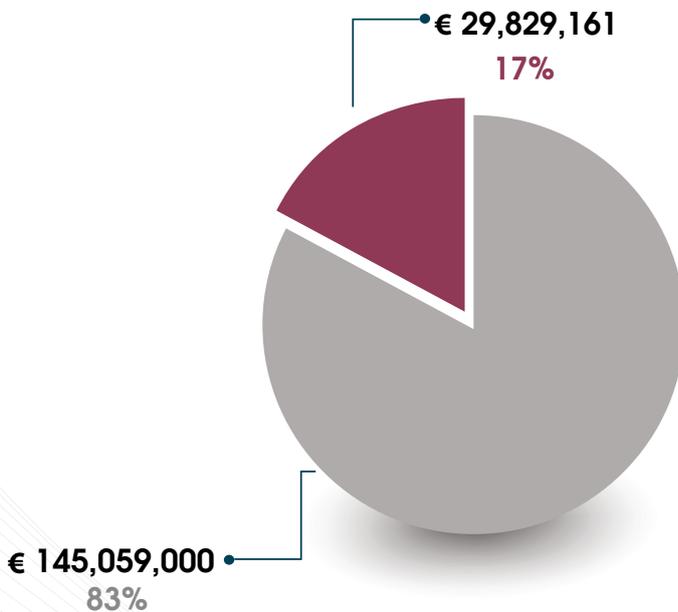
¹²The Gender Policy Marker is a system adopted by the OECD-DAC to classify development cooperation projects according to their focus on GEWE. The system uses three levels: 0 - Not targeted (or examined). The project does not target GEWE and does not integrate gender considerations into its activities. 1 - Significant. The project includes GEWE as a secondary objective, but is not its main focus. 2 - Principle: Gender equality and the empowerment of women, girls and girls are the primary objective of the project.

11- PORTFOLIO AICS ISLAMABAD OFFICE 2024

As of December 2024, the AICS Islamabad portfolio for Pakistan is worth €174,888,161. Of this amount, 57%—over €100 million—is allocated to ongoing projects. The remaining 43% (€74.4 million) is either classified as pledged funding following the announcement made at the Geneva Conference in January 2023 or is included in the repurposing analysis of residual funds from completed projects.

STATUS	CATEGORY	TOTAL BUDGET	NO.OF PROJECTS
TO DATE	Soft Loan	74,659,000	4
	Grant	25,829,161	14
TOTAL EXISTING		100,488,161	18
PLEGDED	Soft Loan	70,400,000	2
	Grant	4,000,000	1
TOTAL PLEDGED		74,400,000	3
TOTAL		174,888,161	21

Budget division between grant and soft loan

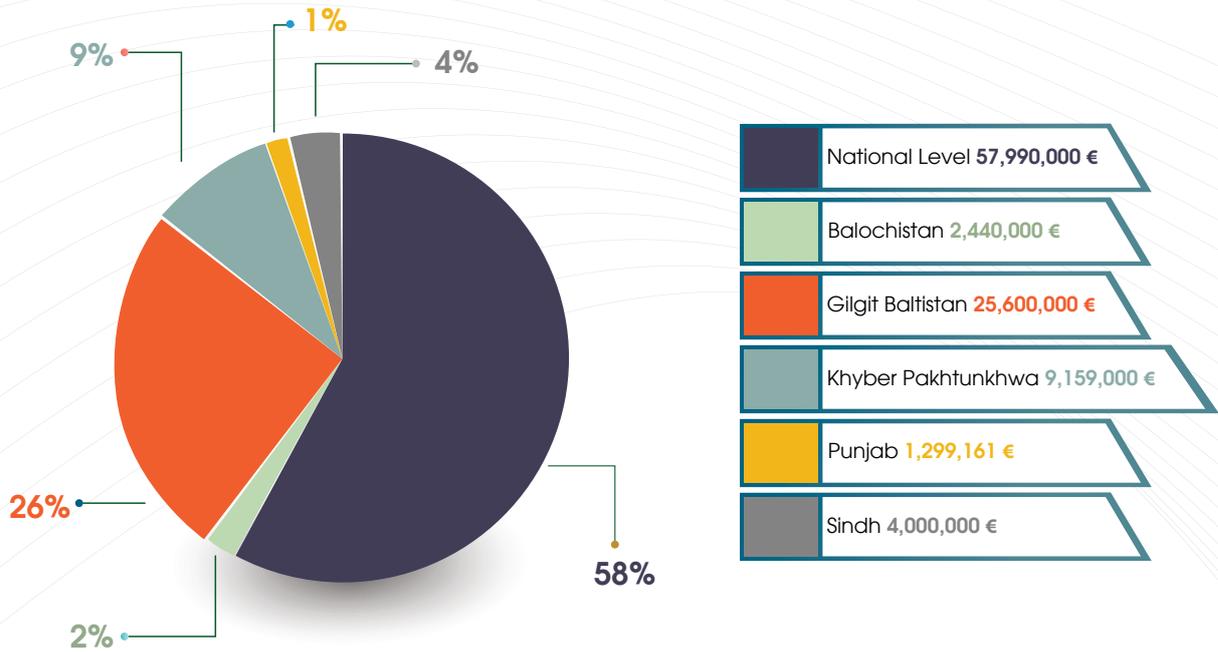


The entire portfolio comprises **21 projects** financed through a combination of **grants** (off-budget) and **soft loans** (on-budget). Grants, totaling just under **30 million euros**, account for **17%** of the overall budget. In contrast, **soft loans** exceed **145 million euros** and represent **83%** of the total funding, supporting **six initiatives** that are either ongoing or in the defining phase (pledged).



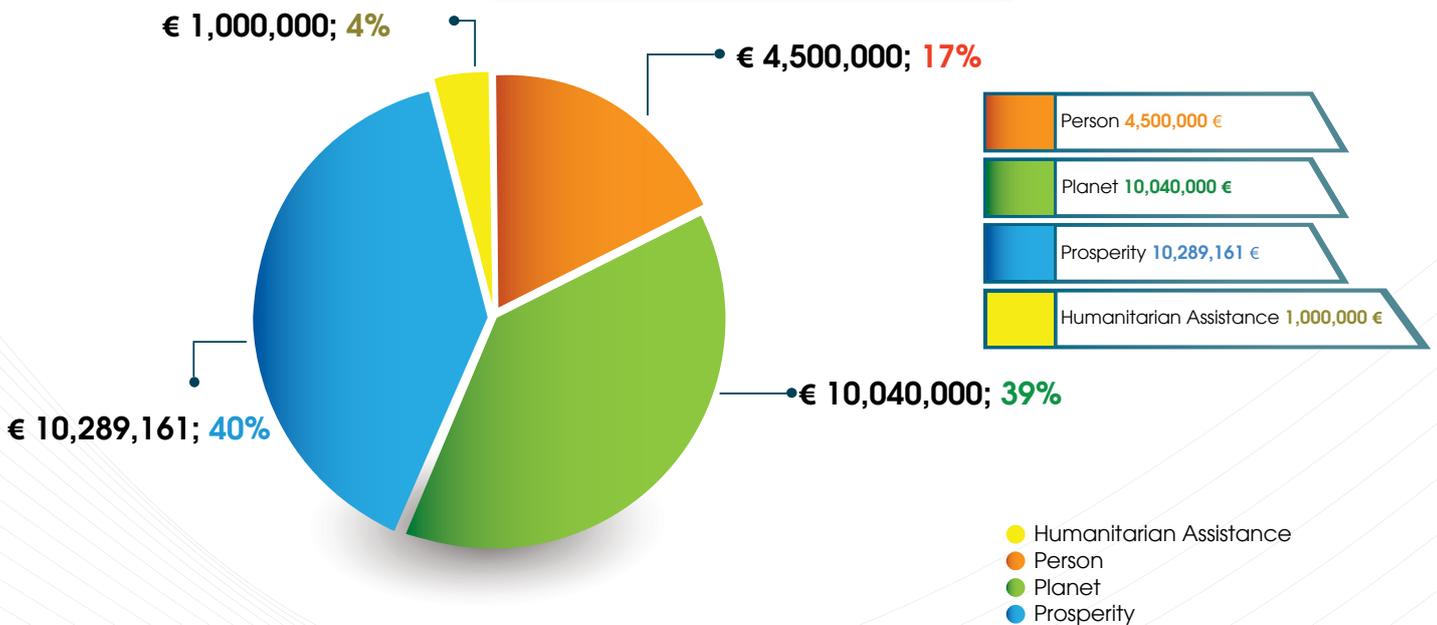
The **current project portfolio** includes **18 funded initiatives**, with the majority of the budget—58%—allocated to national-level projects. Among the regions, Gilgit-Baltistan receives the largest share of the remaining funds, accounting for 26% of the total, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 9%, and the remaining funds are distributed across the other provinces.

Percentage of budget allocated as per administrative areas



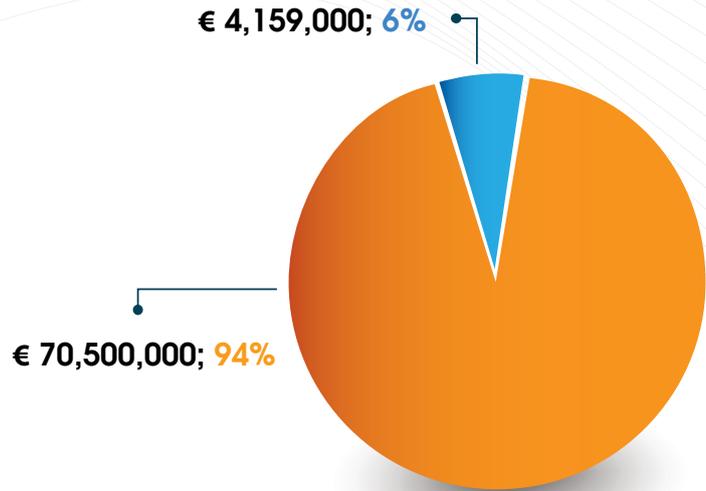
Ongoing **grant projects** amount to over **€25 million**, encompassing **14 active initiatives**. Thematically, **6 projects** fall under the **Prosperity** pillar, **5** under **Planet**, **2** under **Person**, and **1** is categorized under the emergency sector. This distribution is also reflected in the budget allocation: **initiatives under the Prosperity and Planet pillars** account for **approximately 80% of the resources**, with a combined **budget exceeding €10 million**.

Percentage of existing grant funds and number of projects as per pillar



In the **soft loan (on-budget)** portfolio, there are currently **four active projects** with a total value exceeding **€74 million**. Funding is predominantly concentrated under the **Person pillar, which accounts for approximately 94% of the total budget** across three projects. The remaining allocation falls under the Prosperity pillar, represented by one initiative.

Percentage of outstanding soft loan and number of projects divided by pillars



Hence, the projects are strategically distributed across different SDGs through the three pillars of cooperation: **People, Prosperity, and Planet**. For each pillar, a predominant SDG emerges, both in terms of the number of projects and the breadth of the targets involved.

PILLAR PEOPLE

- **SDG 2 - Zero Hunger** is the most represented, encompassing the highest number of projects and covering a wide range of targets related to **food security, nutrition, and the resilience of rural communities**.

PILLAR PROSPERITY

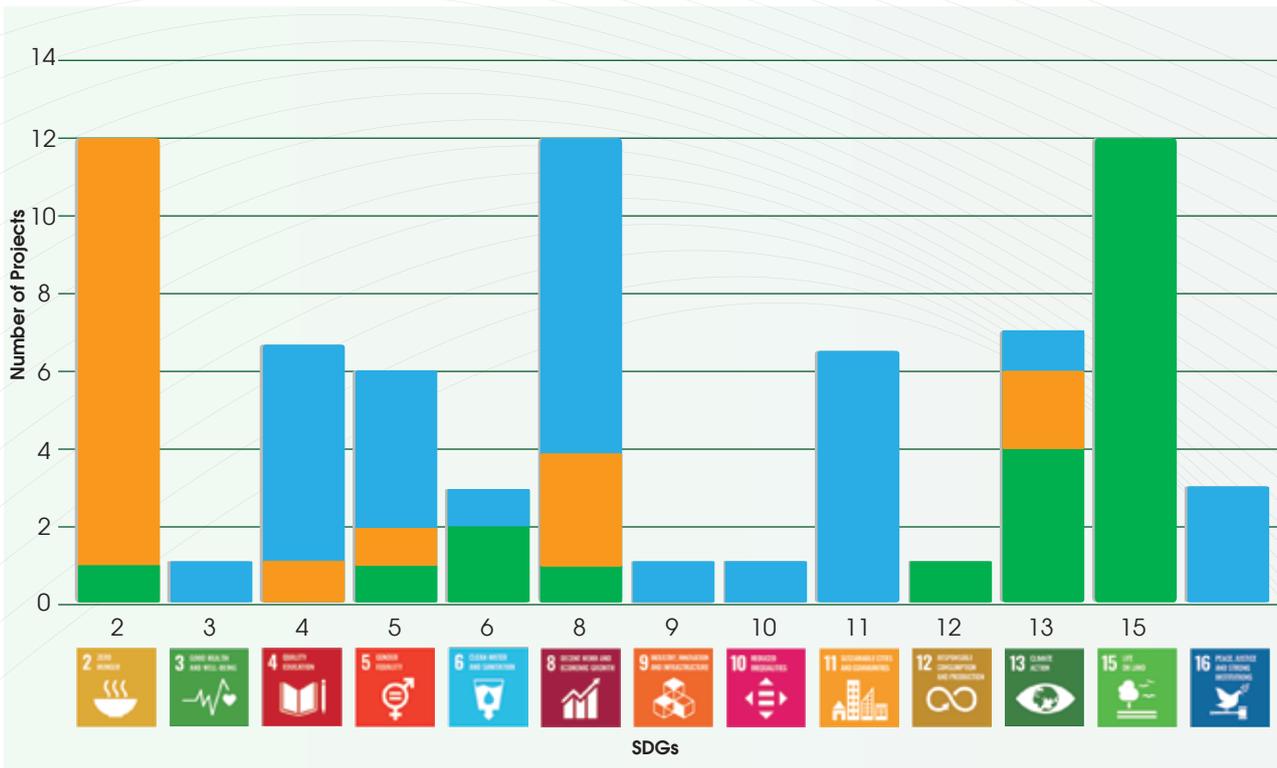
- **SDG 8 - Strengthened resilience and Decent Work and Economic Growth** stands out as a central reference point, with projects focused on **livelihood improvement and labor market inclusion**, as well as **SDG 11**, particularly concerning the protection of **cultural heritage**.

PILLAR PLANET

- **SDG 15 - Life on Land** is the most prominent, with initiatives addressing **biodiversity conservation, sustainable natural resource management, and ecosystem degradation** in a systemic manner.

Some SDGs function as **cross-cutting themes**, spanning more than one pillar. This is the case for **SDG 13 - Climate Action**, which integrates projects across Planet, People, and Prosperity, reflecting the transversal nature of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Similarly, **SDG 5 - Gender Equality** and **SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth** intersect across various sectors. Lastly, the Prosperity Pillar covers the broadest range of SDGs, underscoring a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable development. In addition to a strong focus on SDG 8, it includes interventions related to resilient infrastructure (SDG 9), cultural heritage protection (SDG 11), promotion of the rule of law and effective institutions (SDG 16), and quality education (SDG 4).

Target distribution of SDGs of existing projects, by pillar.



- Project- Prosperity
- Project- People
- Project- Planet

AICS Islamabad Office Portfolio also includes the **Pakistan Italy Debt Swap Agreement (PIDSA)** signed in 2006 between the Governments of Pakistan and Italy. It has **converted around 84 million euros of debt into funds for development projects in the health, education, agriculture and infrastructure sectors**. The programme financed 48 projects, of which 46 were closed and 2 are in the process of administrative closure. The remaining debt to be written off is approximately EUR 400,000. The closure of PIDSA has been extended to June 2025.

PARTNERS

MAIN INSTITUTIONAL COUNTERPARTS IN PAKISTAN



Ministry of Economic Affairs



Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination



Ministry of National Food Security & Research



GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA



Pakistan Oil Seed & Department



BISP

UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES (UN)



CIVIL SOCIETY AND NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS



ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS



Università
degli Studi
di Cagliari



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI MILANO



Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia



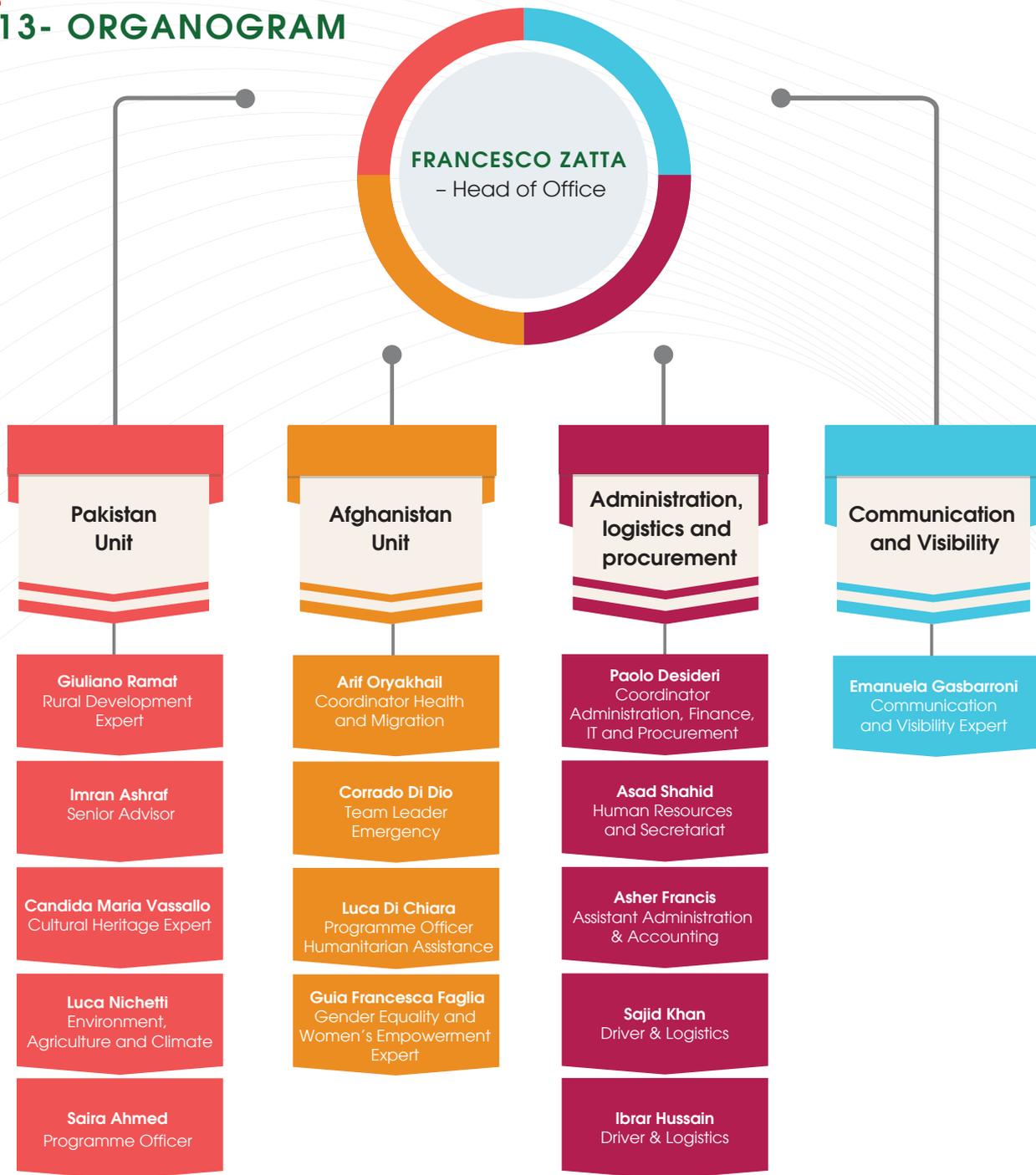
12- WAY FORWARD

AICS Islamabad is committed to advancing the three pillars and four strategic outcomes, with a particular focus on food security, climate resilience, decent work, and the promotion of cultural heritage, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the 2024–2026 Triennial Strategy.

- **Cultural heritage and decent work:** Building on the results achieved to further enhance replicability.
- **Agro-food systems:** To enhance productivity in the agricultural and livestock sectors by strengthening skills and facilitating technology transfer, with the goal of improving living conditions in rural areas.
- **Adaptation to climate change:** Improving livelihoods and environmental governance for the economic well-being of vulnerable communities and reduce risks.
- **Gender equality and social inclusion:** To contribute to the economic empowerment of women and girls through a gender equality approach.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** A nexus approach will be prioritized through integrated humanitarian action, ensuring continuous and active engagement in coordination mechanisms. Simultaneously, special attention will be given to the regional dimension to effectively and specifically address emerging needs, particularly those related to migration dynamics



13- ORGANOGRAM



During 2024, various experts served at AICS Islamabad before taking on new assignments: Pietro Del Sette, Environment and Agriculture Coordinator, Jacopo Branchesi, Coordinator - Pakistan, Andrea Ferro, Expert for Emergency Afghanistan, Muhameda Tulumovic, Team Leader Humanitarian Aid, Rita Chiara Mele, Expert Pillar Planet, Marco Giallonardi, Expert Communication and Visibility, e Gianna Da Re, Consultant.





14- PROJECT SNAPSHOTS

Photo Credits: AICS | ETI | MAIP | UNESCO | Evk2CNR

14.1- PILLAR-PERSON: RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

There are **four projects** under the Rural Development and Food Security program. Their details are as follows:

1- Olive Culture - Holistic and multi-professional mechanism for an olive oil value chain in Pakistan - AID 012212/01/0

The project has contributed to strengthening the Pakistani olive oil value chain by involving institutions, businesses, farmers, youth, women and consumers in order to improve the productivity and quality of Pakistani olive oil. The predetermined results have been achieved with the aim of addressing the country's agricultural needs and challenges by enhancing food and nutrition security, environmental resilience, and economic development, while engaging key stakeholders in the olive value chain. The innovative aspects included the promotion of sectoral policies,

the implementation of extensive field training activities covering the main stages of the value chain in a participatory manner, benefiting local research institutions, local authorities, and remote communities. Additionally, support was provided for income-generating activities for youth and women. Festivals and events were also organized to promote olive cultivation, including activities to support branding and quality certification.



Deliberation	N. 134, CC 14/12/2020
Zone of Intervention	Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Gilgit Baltistan
Funding Channel	Bilateral grant
SDGs	SDG 2, target 4, target 2.a - SDG 4, target 7 - SDG 5, target 5 SDG 8, target 9 - SDG 13, target 13.b
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Mediterranean Agricultural Institute of Bari (CIHEAM Bari)
Local Counterpart	Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R)
Total Cost	€ 1,500,000
Duration	17th January 2022 to 30th June 2024
General Objective	Improving food and nutrition security, environmental resilience and crop enhancement through olive cultivation and its derivatives in Pakistan and the relevant provinces
Specific Objectives	Equipping rural communities and institutional, public and private actors in the intervention areas; a sustainable holistic mechanism for strengthening Pakistan's olive oil value chain and its entire spectrum of occupations to ensure continuity in income generation

<p>Expected Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an analysis of the olive tree’s agronomic, cultural and social heritage • Develop the olive oil sector through the support of an appropriate policy. • Improve and characterize the value chain of the Pakistan olive tree. • Involve women and young people in income-generating activities linked to the olive oil value chain. • Increase the commitment of Pakistani society in promoting olive cultivation • Involve women and young people in income-generating activities linked to the olive oil value chain. • Increase the commitment of Pakistani society in promoting olive cultivation.
<p>Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Equipping rural communities and institutional, public and private actors in the intervention areas; a sustainable holistic mechanism for strengthening Pakistan’s olive oil value chain and its entire spectrum of occupations to ensure continuity in income generation.</p>

2- Expansion of the olive oil sector and promotion of climate-resilient rural development in Pakistan - 012931/01/0

The project strategy focuses on a comprehensive and inclusive approach aimed at enhancing the capacity of Pakistani stakeholders to foster collaboration and synergy within the olive oil value chain. This will ensure sustainable agricultural production and contribute to food security. A key component of the project is the establishment of the Pakistan Olive Oil Council (POOC), which will bring together public and private stakeholders to support decision-makers and enhance the global competitiveness of Pakistan’s olive sector, enabling it to meet international standards.



A 30% increase in productivity is expected, leading to a significant improvement in olive oil production. The ultimate goal is to position Pakistan as a producer of high-quality olive oil, reducing reliance on imports and contributing to economic and rural development, social cohesion, and the production of high-quality edible oil that meets nutritional and organoleptic standards.

Launched in September 2024, the first activities have already begun, particularly field training sessions, including a dedicated cycle on olive tree pruning techniques.

<p>Deliberation</p>	<p>N. 28, CC 9/04/2024</p>
<p>Zone of Intervention</p>	<p>Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab</p>
<p>Funding Channel</p>	<p>Bilateral grant</p>
<p>SDGs</p>	<p>SDG 2, Target 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 - SDG 8, Target 8.2, 8.3 SDG 13, Target 13.2</p>
<p>Gender Marker</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Executing Entity</p>	<p>Mediterranean Agricultural Institute of Bari (CIHEAM Bari)</p>
<p>Local Counterpart</p>	<p>Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R)</p>

Total Cost	€ 3,000,000
Duration	136 months: from 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2027
General Objective	Contribute to inclusive growth for the improvement of nutritional security and resilience to the effects of climate change through oil production and industries
Specific Objectives	Improve the capacity of public and private actors in Pakistan to promote quality and quantity olive production and develop climate resilience
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the capacities of the federal government and relevant provinces to assist rural communities and the private sector. Improving public and private olive nurseries. Improve the quality and quantity of production by applying good agricultural practices Encourage the increase of consumption of Pakistani olive oil in the local market, Involve women and young people in income-generating activities.

3- Economic Transformation Initiative (ETI-GB) - AID 010710/01/1

The Gilgit-Baltistan Economic Transformation Initiative (ETI-GB) is a seven-year development programme of the Government of Pakistan co-financed by AICS and IFAD for a total of USD 100 million . The overall objective of the programme is to improve incomes and reduce poverty and malnutrition in rural areas of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). ETI-GB aims to increase farm incomes and employment for at least 100,000 rural households in the GB through the sustainable development of agricultural value chains. The programme consists of three components: infrastructure, support services for value chain development and support to agricultural development policies



Deliberation	N 58, CC 13/06/2016
Zone of Intervention	10 Districts of Gilgit-Baltistan: Gilgit, Hunza, Ghizer, Nagar, Astore, Diamer, Skardu, Ghanche, Kharmang & Shigar
Funding Channel	Soft loan
SDG	SDG 2
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Department of Planning and Development, Gilgit Baltistan
Total Cost	€ 20,500,000
Duration	August 2023 - September 2028
General Objective	Improving incomes and reducing poverty and malnutrition in rural areas of the Gilgit Baltistan region

Specific Objectives	Increase in cultivated area and production, improve connectivity with the market through strategic investments in infrastructure (irrigation system, roads and bridges) Support for agricultural production and improvement of the supply chain and value chain also for the farm
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of farms, roads, bridges, additional irrigated areas and economic infrastructure through the development of irrigation. • Creation of services to support value added development: allocation of a value chain fund and technical assistance, social mobilization and organisation of farmers, agricultural dissemination, agricultural research and land titling. • Support to sectoral policies.
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 100,000 rural households in GB • Local public institutions

4- Development of vocational skills in agriculture - Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) - AID 010982/01/6

The project aims to improve a range of both horticultural and valuable crops in developing their value chain through human resource development, improvement of infrastructure and processing techniques. Initiatives will focus on the creation of eight pilot sustainable eco-villages to promote resilient technologies with a particular focus on water management, renewable energy use and waste management . A centre of excellence will be established for research, training, disease management, improvement of olive quality and harvesting and conservation techniques. The project includes strengthening the citrus, date and mushroom supply chain by supporting the entire production chain from nursery to marketing.



Deliberation	N. 59, CC 18/11/2016
Zone of Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punjab: Potohar area, Sargodha and Chawal • Balochistan: Kila Saifullah, Zirat, Mustung, Turbat, Panjgoor e Kharan • Sindh: Sukkur, Khairpur, Lasbela, Tandojam • Azad Jammu and Kashmir: Muzuffarabad, Bagh, Girdupata and Rawalakot • Gilgit Baltistan: Gilgit, Skardu, Hunza, Astore
Funding Channel	Soft loan
SDG	SDG 2
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Ministry of National Food Security and Research
Partner	Provincial Agriculture Extension & Research Departments
Total Cost	€ 20,000,000

Duration	48 months - Scheduled to begin in 2025
General Objective	Improving technical skills in the value chain of agriculture
Specific Objectives	Develop technical and vocational training in Pakistan with specific reference to the environmental agricultural sector
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to villages to optimize high-efficiency irrigation for value agriculture. • Building the capacity of rural communities for greater resilience. • Creation of certified nurseries and distribution of fruit plants. • Capacity building for more than 2000 stakeholders in the olive oil sector. • Strengthen the olive oil quality laboratory for product certification.
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal and provincial agricultural extension research departments, farmers' communities and growers of olive trees, citrus fruits, dates, grapes and pistachios. • Farmers and producers, public officials, research institutes. • Local institutions. • Women, youth, families in rural areas and companies involved in the olive sector.



14.2- PILLAR-PLANET: ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND RISK REDUCTION

There are **six projects** under the Environment, Climate Change, and Risk Reduction Program. Their details are as follows:

1- Contribution to the Second Phase of the Pakistani Government's Assistance Programme for Flood Victims - AID 009651/01/4

In August 2010, Pakistan experienced devastating floods that affected 78 districts and nearly 10% of the population, across an area corresponding to approximately one-third of the country. The flooding had a catastrophic impact on households: 52% suffered the complete collapse of all housing structures, and 72% were forced to leave their homes for a period exceeding one month. As a result, families had to resort to coping strategies such as borrowing money, using up savings, selling assets, and reducing food consumption.



The Citizens Damage Compensation Programme (CDCP), supported by the World Bank, reached over 1 million families (7.5 million people) affected by the floods, providing them with cash transfers (amounting to USD 404 per beneficiary household) to help restart their economic and working lives and to support the reconstruction of damaged or destroyed homes. Beneficiaries were enrolled in the programme through biometric verification linked to the national Identification database, and the cash grants were disbursed via debit cards, thereby involving the banking sector.

The project also provided technical assistance to local institutions to improve governance, establishing effective mechanisms for fund requests, disbursement, monitoring, and evaluation. A total of EUR 30 million was disbursed in two tranches in 2012 and 2013. Currently, an assessment of the dossier is underway with the government counterpart to explore the reallocation of unused funds amounting to EUR 27.5 million.

Deliberation	N. 7 - 25/07/2011
Zone of Intervention	Areas affected by the flood of 2010 for a total of 78 districts on national territory pertaining to all provinces
Funding Channel	Soft loan
SDG	SDG 2
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Cabinet Division, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA)
Total Cost	€ 57,750,000

Duration	October 2012 - to date
General Objective	Improving the situation of people affected by the 2010 flood
Specific Objectives	Support the economic recovery of populations affected by the 2010 floods and the rehabilitation of infrastructure.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of cash for housing • Disbursement of cash for food
Beneficiaries	1 million families affected by the 2010 floods

2- Glaciers and Students - A scientific approach to monitor the climate and glaciers in Pakistan's mountainous regions and improve prevention of hydrogeological risk - AID 012359/01/0T

The project aimed to support environmental monitoring and natural resource management in the mountains of Pakistan, where protected areas such as the Central Karakorum National Park and the Deosai National Park are located. Project activities have contributed to improved risk assessment and prevention, addressing in particular the Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) and hydrogeological hazards; thanks to the application of remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques and the development of a dedicated, automatically updated web platform based on the experience of the information system Ev-K2-CNR - SHARE Geonetwork (<http://geonetwork.evkc2cnr.org/>).

Moreover, the project actively involved Pakistani universities in monitoring activities through a dedicated training and capacity-building programme in the fields of glaciological monitoring and remote sensing analysis. The aim was to equip them with the appropriate tools to ensure the pursuit of long-term research objectives beyond the project's completion and to establish a system of scientific communication with both local and international institutions.



Deliberation	N. 83, CC. 19/07/2021
Zone of Intervention	Gilgit - Baltistan, Mountain Regions of Northern Pakistan
Financing Channel	Multilateral, Grant
SDGs	SDG 13, Target 1 & 2
Gender Marker	Not examined
Executing Entity	UNDP Pakistan
Partners	EVK2-CNR, University of Baltistan, Karakorum International University

Local Counterpart	Government of Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan Meteorological Department.
Total Cost	€ 1,100,000
Duration	24th March 2022 to 30th September 2024
General Objective	Contribute to a more efficient management of water resources in the mountainous regions of Pakistan: the protected areas of the National Parks of the Central Karakorum (CKNP) and the Deosai (DNP)
Specific Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to villages to optimize high-efficiency irrigation for value agriculture. • Building the capacity of rural communities for greater resilience. • Creation of certified nurseries and distribution of fruit plants. • Capacity building for more than 2000 stakeholders in the olive oil sector. • Strengthen the olive oil quality laboratory for product certification.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve climate-environmental monitoring networks in northern Pakistan. • Publish the complete inventory of glaciers in Pakistan. • Implement a web-based Geographic Information System (GIS) using SHARE Geonetwork. • Ensure a training programme with Pakistani universities, in collaboration with Italian universities.
Beneficiaries	<p>Direct: Karakorum International University and its students, University of Baltistan, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, officials from provincial ministries, Meteorological Department.</p> <p>Indirect: Community of Gilgit-Baltistan.</p>



3- Global assessment of the state of nature and actions for biodiversity conservation in Northern Pakistan - AID 011605/01/6

The project has contributed to improved knowledge of the state of biodiversity and integrated its protection into national policies. Conducted Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments (SESA) on the infrastructure impacts of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in ecologically sensitive areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. Among the main results, it has developed the Global Report on Conflicts, Migration and Nature and a study on zoonotic diseases, mapping critical habitats and implementing measures to mitigate human-wildlife conflict. The project also strengthened environmental governance through the review of wildlife regulations and the establishment of guidelines for regulated hunting (trophy hunting). It has supported the creation of ecological corridors for biodiversity, developed community ecotourism models, and promoted capacity building initiatives for local institutions and communities, contributing to a sustainable management of natural resources.



Deliberation	N. 80, CC. 06/12/2018
Zone of Intervention	Gilgit – Baltistan, Mountain Regions of Northern Pakistan
Financing Channel	Multilateral, Grant
Sector of Intervention	Environment, participatory development, good governance, disaster risk reduction
SDGs	SGD 15 Target 5 & 6 SDG 12 Target 2
Gender Marker	0
Executing Entity	IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
Partners	WWF- Pakistan Ministry of Climate Change (MoCC), Government of Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency Gilgit-Baltistan (EPA-GB) Gilgit-Baltistan Forest, Wildlife, and Environment Department (GBFWD) Karakoram International University
Local Counterpart	Government of Gilgit Baltistan.
Total Cost	€ 1,000,000
Duration	26/9/2018 to 30/06/2024.
General Objective	Contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and the prevention of environmental degradation in fragile, human-induced and wild ecosystems.
Specific Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve knowledge of the global state of nature and integrate biodiversity degradation and loss into mainstream political and economic decisions. • Safeguard the biodiversity and livelihoods of local communities in selected areas of northern Pakistan from the impacts of infrastructure development projects, particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

<p>Expected Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN flagship report on the state of nature in a globalised world. • Social and environmental impacts of infrastructure development comprehensively assessed, and areas identified for infrastructure development. • Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) applied to CPEC investments. • Red List assessment based on IUCN global criteria completed for northern Pakistan. • Strategic advice from high level experts for an environmentally and socially safe development of the CPEC. • Increased awareness among policy makers of the environmental impacts of CPEC initiatives. • Support to local governments and civil society organizations for the implementation of innovative pilot activities aimed at strengthening community livelihoods resilience.
<p>Beneficiaries</p>	<p>Direct : The direct beneficiaries are the global decision-makers of sustainable development and local communities in northern Pakistan. Indirect: The project benefits those who benefit from ecosystems, which includes governments, professionals and future generations by ensuring the conservation of natural heritage.</p>

4- Water for Development (W4D): Support to sustainable mountain development and adaptation policies - AID 012984/01/0

The project, in continuity with the Glaciers and Students initiative, aims to increase climate adaptation and resilience of Gilgit-Baltistan in order to contribute to the promotion of sustainable and inclusive development in mountain regions. Despite the high vulnerability to climate change risks and the existing national framework of policies and strategies, there is still a need for scientific and technological support which prevents adequate management of environmental risk prevention systems, as well as the effective and evidence-based implementation of policies and strategies for sustainable management of natural resources. To address the challenges of climate change, it is essential to strengthen both institutional and community capacity to safeguard ecosystems and manage natural resources—particularly water resources, which are crucial for sustainable development. By the end of 2024, the project had completed its inception phase, during which preliminary studies, consultations with local institutions and communities, and technical planning were carried out. Glaciological and hydrological monitoring activities were initiated, along with the upgrading of scientific laboratories—including those for water quality analysis—and the development of strategies for the sustainable management of water resources, agriculture, livestock, and ecotourism in the region.



<p>Deliberation</p>	<p>N. 29, CC 09/04/2024</p>
<p>Zone of Intervention</p>	<p>Gilgit – Baltistan, Mountain Regions of Northern Pakistan</p>
<p>Financing Channel</p>	<p>Multilateral, Grant</p>
<p>Sector of Intervention</p>	<p>Adaptation to climate change and risk reduction</p>
<p>SDGs</p>	<p>SGD 8 Target 9 SDG 11 Target 4 SDG 13, Target 2</p>
<p>Gender Marker</p>	<p>0</p>

Executing Entity	UNDP Pakistan
Partners	EVK2-CNR, University of Baltistan, Karakorum International University
Local Counterpart(s)	Government of Gilgit Baltistan (Department of Agriculture, Wildlife and Fisheries; Environment Protection Authority- EPA; Disaster Management Authority- DMA), Pakistan Meteorological Department.
Total Cost	€ 3,000,000
Duration	36 months: 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2027
General Objective	Promote sustainable development in the mountainous regions of northern Pakistan through enhanced capacity for climate change adaptation and ecosystem conservation.
Specific Objective	Improving management of water resources, to promote sustainable farming and livestock practices and to enhance the supply of eco-tourism offerings.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved monitoring capacity of glaciers and water resources for civil and agri-food use. • Increased capacity for sustainable management of the agricultural and livestock supply chain. • Criteria and good practices introduced and adopted for sustainable management of the tourism supply chain. • The capacity of local authorities and communities to implement policies and practices for sustainable management of mountain ecosystems is strengthened.
Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 1400 individuals from local communities, universities and provincial authorities of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) • Officials and experts from EPA-GB, GB DMA, Agriculture, Tourism, Planning and staff of the Central Karakoram and Deosai Parks. • 500 individuals from seven local communities involved in the project. • 200 private sector representatives sensitized • Teachers and 200 students from Karakoram and Baltistan universities trained for monitoring and research.

5- Resilience and Adaptation by Promoting Proactive Actions (RAFAA) - AID 013193/01/0

The initiative aims to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable communities in Pakistan to climate change by promoting sustainable adaptation practices and improving risk governance. Through an integrated approach, the project aims to strengthen multi-hazard early warning systems (MHEWS) by expanding their scope with water quality monitoring tools and community resilience plans that include anticipatory action protocols to mitigate the impacts of extreme climate events. At the same time, it seeks to protect and diversify the livelihoods of communities in Sindh by offering adaptation solutions such as climate-resilient agricultural practices, crop insurance schemes, and nature-based strategies. Finally, the initiative focuses on enhancing institutional capacities at national, provincial, and local levels by providing tools to identify risk factors and improve decision-making in disaster management, thereby ensuring a more effective and timely response to climate challenges.



Deliberation	N. 222, CC. 16/12/2024
Zone of Intervention	Sindh
Financing Channel	Multilateral, Grant
Sector of Intervention	Adaptation to climate change and risk reduction
SDGs	SGD 5 Target A SDG 6 Target 3 SDG 13 Target 1 SDG 15 Target 3
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO
Partners	CESVI
Local Counterpart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock and Fisheries Department, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA). • Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh, Sindh Irrigation Department. • Sindh Social Protection Authority (SSPA), Sindh Planning and Development Department. • Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Flood Forecasting Division (FFD). • Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Systems (MoPASS), MoCC&EC, NDMA. • Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).
Total Cost	€ 4,000,000
Duration	36 months
General Objective	Strengthened national capacity to manage the impact of climate change through sustainable adaptation practices and improved governance.
Specific Objective	The target communities in Sindh demonstrate greater resilience to climate risks and shocks through the implementation of effective adaptation strategies, improved livelihoods, and robust disaster risk reduction planning, including anticipatory actions. (AA).
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved capacity of local institutions and communities to anticipate, address and respond to the impact of climate change • Communities' livelihoods are more resilient to climate change, with improved access to quality natural resource data • The ability of national, provincial and local institutions to identify risk factors and possible measures to respond to adverse events is strengthened for improved decision-making.
Beneficiaries	<p>Direct : 25,000 households (175,000 individuals). Direct beneficiaries will be supported through training, resilience interventions, nature-based solutions and insurance models.</p> <p>Indirect: 1.5million beneficiaries. Indirect beneficiaries will be involved through community assessments, strengthening of systems, awareness raising and landscape interventions such as agroforestry and water management.</p>

6- Ecosystem services and job creation. Sustainable management of natural resources in mountain areas - AID 012006/02/4

The initiative aims to improve the living conditions of rural communities through the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in mountainous areas of the countries participating in the Mountain Partnership (MP). The project adopts a strategy focused on institutional development and capacity building to introduce and implement methodologies for analysing environmental and socio-economic conditions and for developing action plans to address vulnerability in the targeted mountain areas of the involved countries (Afghanistan, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, and Pakistan). In 2024, the project completed national-level vulnerability assessments in Pakistan and Montenegro, identifying pilot areas for local analysis. In Afghanistan, Albania, and Kyrgyzstan, national assessments are still ongoing. Workshops and trainings were conducted on Geographic Information System (GIS), land degradation, and socio-economic indicators. In Pakistan, the analysis of the pilot areas has begun.



Deliberation	N. 113, CC 18/12/2019
Zone of Intervention	Multi-country project: Afghanistan, Albania, Kyrgyzstan Montenegro and Pakistan
Financing Channel	Multilateral, Grant
Sector of Intervention	Adaptation to climate change and risk reduction
SDG	SGD 15
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO
Partners	University of Rome "La Sapienza"
Local Counterpart	Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination; Ministry of Natural Food Security and Research.
Total Cost	€ 940,000
Duration	1st January 2020 to 30th June 2025
General Objective	Creating a favourable environment to reduce soil degradation and improve biodiversity and ecosystem services in watersheds, pastures and marginal areas, generating inclusive employment
Specific Objective	The institutional and technical capacities of key environmental actors are strengthened to be applied in sustainable management of natural resources and to foster active involvement in relevant international and regional forums and networks.

Expected Results

- Assessment of institutional and technical capacities
- Institutional capacity building for the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)
- Development of skills for the design and implementation of environmental strategies
- Participation in international and regional forums and networks
- Assessment of environmental conditions
- Identification of implementation strategies
- Institutional capacity building in sustainable management of soil, water (SLWM) and natural resources (NRM)
- Implementation of two seminars at national level
- Joint action plan and coordination platform with the Government for the Pakistani diaspora in Italy established

Beneficiaries

Direct : The project will directly target **25,000 households (175,000 individuals)**. Direct beneficiaries will be supported through training, resilience interventions, nature-based solutions and insurance models. **Indirect: 1.5million** beneficiaries. Indirect beneficiaries will be involved through community assessments, strengthening of systems, awareness raising and landscape interventions such as agroforestry and water management.



14.3.1- PILLAR- PROSPERITY: EDUCATION, TRAINING AND DECENT WORK SECTOR

There are **three projects** under the Education, Training and Decent Work Sector. Their details are as follows:

1- Promotion of decent work opportunities for the economic empowerment of vulnerable segments of society - AID 011196/01/0

The project contributes to improving the conditions of kiln workers in Pakistan by addressing child and forced labor through awareness-raising initiatives, training, and strengthening social protection services. It has promoted the "Zigzag" technology to reduce emissions and improve the sector's efficiency. Despite challenges such as COVID-19 and political instability, the project, in collaboration with trade unions, has improved access to social services and the adoption of safer working practices. Pilot initiatives have raised awareness and led to sustainable changes, while dialogue between institutions and communities has strengthened sector governance. In the final phase, the project focuses on conducting baseline analyses and a cost-benefit evaluation of the Zigzag technology, involving the public sector to reduce emissions, and formally registering the kilns and workers. At the same time, it is promoting improved labor practices and conducting a gender study to ensure a just transition for the communities involved.



Deliberation	N.106, CC 29/09/2017
Zone of Intervention	Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Baluchistan and Islamabad Capital Territory, Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK)
Financing Channel	Bilateral, Grant
Sector of Intervention	Education, training and decent work
SDGs	SGD 8 Target 1 & 2 & 3
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	ILO
Partners	Trade Union Institute for Development Cooperation - ISCOS
Local Counterpart	Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Department Labour and Human Resource Department, Punjab
Total Cost	€ 1,500,000

Duration	1st December 2017 to 30th June 2025
General Objective	Strengthen institutional capacities to promote decent work in Pakistan, particularly in the field of brick kilns and quarries, improving social protection services and the engagement of the Pakistani diaspora in Italy.
Specific Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement an effective system for monitoring and eliminating child and forced labour in marble kilns and quarries. • Promote a coordinated social protection system. • Encourage the active involvement of the Pakistani diaspora in Italy for activities to support the promotion of decent work in Pakistan.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for furnaces to improve performance and establish a self-monitoring mechanism • Promoting literacy and rights awareness among Sialkot kiln workers as a means of preventing forced labour • Support for Sialkot furnace workers to access social security services • Access to supported social protection services for the poorest and most vulnerable families through the One-Window-Operation system • Coordinated social protection system replicated in other provinces • National social security institutions and enhanced platforms • Material developed for knowledge of decent work issues in Pakistan • Joint action plan and coordination platform with the Government for the Pakistani diaspora in Italy established
Beneficiaries	<p>Work component: Kiln workers in the province of Punjab (Sialkot district), trade unions, kiln owners, civil servants and marble quarries in the region.</p> <p>Social protection component: Vulnerable families selected on the basis of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) poverty rankings for the KP districts and the provinces of Punjab and Baluchistan.</p> <p>Pakistani diaspora component: The Pakistani community in Italy, with a particular focus on young Pakistanis.</p>

2-Just Transitions for men, women and youth through skills training and jobs creation in sustainable construction and eco-tourism in flood affected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - AID 013188

The project addresses the severe employment losses in the tourism sector following the 2022 floods in Pakistan, with a focus on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), where extensive damage to hotels, restaurants, and related infrastructure disrupted livelihoods. By promoting climate-resilient reconstruction and sustainable eco-tourism models, the initiative aims to equip approximately 10,000 individuals—especially women and youth—with certified skills in construction and tourism, thus fostering income generation and gender inclusivity.



The project also responds to the increased demand for environmentally friendly bricks in post-flood reconstruction, aligning recovery efforts with sustainability. Building on Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) findings and national development strategies, the intervention supports local enterprises, aiming to establish 200 women/youth-led businesses and indirectly benefit over 100,000 people. It contributes to Pillar Prosperity Outcome 3 by promoting economic and job placement activities linked to culture and sustainable tourism, and it will track progress through AICS indicators related to tourism and entrepreneurship in culture and tourism.

Deliberation	N. 223 – CC. 16/12/2024
Zone of Intervention	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KP)
Financing Channel	Multilateral, Grant
SDGs	SDG 8.8 and SDG 11.4
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	International Labour Organisation - ILO
Partners	Trade Union Institute for Development Cooperation - ISCOS
Local Counterpart	National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTC)
Total Cost	€ 2,000,000
Duration	3 years
General Objective	Foster economic resilience, promoting environmentally sustainable practices, and generating employment opportunities within the tourism and construction sectors.
Specific Objective	Enhance climate resilient constructions and economic gender and youth inclusivity for sustainable tourism in KP
Expected Results	Promote economic and job placement activities related to culture and sustainable and responsible tourism.
Beneficiaries	The direct beneficiaries shall be about 10,000 persons in KP along with fostering 200 women/youth-led enterprises. The indirect beneficiaries of the project will be over 100,000 inhabitants of KP

3- BELIEF Well-being, Empowerment, Work, Education and Training - AID 012970/01/0

The BELIEF project aims to improve the quality of life for vulnerable communities in the Punjab province through an integrated approach that combines education, vocational training, labor rights, access to essential services, and the promotion of interfaith dialogue. Activities include improving existing schools, training youth and adults to increase employability, raising awareness on labor rights, and creating more sustainable economic opportunities. Additionally, the project involves organizing cultural events and interfaith conferences to strengthen social cohesion and combat discrimination. The strategic partnership with local and international organizations will ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the intervention.

During the first six months, the project identified beneficiaries for vocational training courses, started purchasing equipment for tailoring and beauty therapy, and planned infrastructure interventions in schools. It has trained 92 teachers on inclusive methodologies and child protection, launched awareness activities on labor rights and access to healthcare services, and organized an initial event to promote interfaith dialogue in Faisalabad.



Deliberation	N. 3414, 15/12/2023
Zone of Intervention	Province of Punjab (Lahore - areas of Youhanabad, Faisalabad, Sargodha)
Financing Channel	Bilateral, Grant
Sector of Intervention	Education, training and decent work
SDGs	SGD 10 Target 2 & 3 SGD 16 Target 1 & 2
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Trade union institute for development cooperation - ISCOS
Partners	Don Bosco Educational Society La Salle Brothers Pakistan Marist Foundation for International Solidarity - FMSI De La Salle Solidarietà Internazionale ETS
Local Counterpart	Pakistan Workers Federation (PWF) and local educational institutions
Total Cost	€ 1,299,160.83 (95% AICS, 5% monetary contribution ISCOS)
Duration	1st June 2024 to 30th May 2026
General Objective	Supporting Christian communities through the response to basic needs, protection of rights, promotion of socio-economic inclusion and interreligious dialogue.
Specific Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the socioeconomic inclusion of Christian communities in the Punjab province in a more conducive environment for interfaith dialogue. Promote the improvement of living and working conditions for Christian communities through vocational training, quality education, and access to fundamental rights.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian-majority communities in the Punjab province have improved access to quality educational and training services. Christian-majority communities in the Punjab province have gained greater knowledge and opportunities to enjoy their fundamental rights.
Beneficiaries	Direct: 17,578 people , including students, teachers, vulnerable workers and community members. Indirect: about 50,000 target community members.



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14.3.2- PILLAR- PROSPERITY: SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

There are **five projects** under Safeguarding and Promoting Cultural Heritage Program. Their details are as follows:

1- Khyber PATH - Employment opportunities and adaptation to climate change through cultural heritage and responsible tourism - AID 13189/01/0

Since 1955, the continuous work of the Italian Archaeological Mission in the Swat Valley in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has led to significant achievements in archaeology, restoration, and museography, as well as a deep understanding of the context. Based on these foundations, this project aims to protect, promote, and enhance the cultural and natural heritage of KP with a focus on economic development. In support of national development plans, the project intends to contribute to the growth of institutional capacity to foster climate change adaptation policies and the protection and



conservation of heritage through certified on-the-job professional training. Furthermore, the planned activities aim to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the community through ecotourism. The project intends to create a route between archaeological sites that will generate employment and income opportunities by supporting entrepreneurship from the Swat Valley to the Taxila KP archaeological area, along a 125 km path connecting the archaeological sites of Barikot, Zalamkot, Hati-lar, Palai, Asota, Thareli, and Taxila KP through the Wonders' Trails and the Elephant Road.

The project is developed in KP, which, in addition to possessing an extremely rich cultural heritage, was also one of the areas most affected by the 2022 floods, with significant damage to accommodation structures and archaeological sites.

Deliberation	N. 218, CC 16/12/2024
Zone of Intervention	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KP): from the Swat Valley to the archaeological site of Taxila KP (bordering with Punjab)
Financing Channel	Bilateral - Grant ex art. 24 L. 125/2014
SDGs	SDG 8: Target 8.5, 8.9 SDG 11 Target 11.4
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Ca' Foscari University of Venice as co-manager of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan (MAIP)
Partners	Trade Union Institute for Development Cooperation - ISCOS, in collaboration with Pakistani universities
Local Counterpart	Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, KP for Culture, Tourism, Archaeology and Museums Department - DOAM, KP
Total Cost	€ 3,000,000
Duration	36 months - Scheduled to begin in 2025

General Objective	Enhancing the preservation of cultural and natural heritage for socio-economic well-being
Specific Objective	Supporting socio-economic well-being linked to culture and sustainable responsible tourism.
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved the management capacity of authorities in safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage for tourism. • Increased the offering of cultural tourism itineraries in the provincial territory through the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of archaeological sites, including those damaged by the 2022 floods. • Enhanced technical and professional training (TVET) in line with the principles of green and digital transition, in the cultural heritage sector and the responsible tourism supply chain. • Strengthened the responsible tourism supply chain at the provincial level.
Beneficiaries	<p>Direct: 2540 university students, members of the community, officials of the provincial authorities.</p> <p>Indirect: 17,000 families of direct beneficiaries, tourists, and resident communities in KP.</p>

2- Heritage Field Schools (HFS) - Development of Professional Skills in the Management of Cultural Heritage in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa - AID 012786

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is characterized by a rich and diverse cultural heritage, which holds significant potential for the economic development of the entire province. However, the conservation of archaeological sites is inadequate due to the lack of centers and laboratories dedicated to research, documentation, and conservation activities. The project aims to contribute to the economic development of KP by enhancing institutional and community capacities, creating job and social inclusion opportunities. In particular, the establishment of conservation/restoration centers/laboratories, which will be renovated and equipped, alongside certified training for specialized technicians and workers with on-the-job training in excavations, will ensure the preservation of cultural identity. On the other hand, certified training for the police forces and provincial customs officers will enhance skills in the protection and management of heritage.



Deliberation	CC 154 - 09/10/2023
Zone of Intervention	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KP), districts of Haripur, Peshawar, Swat, Chitral and Dear Ismail Khan
Funding Channel	Soft loan
SDGs	SDG 8, Target 8.9; SDG 11, Target 11.4
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	Department of Planning and Development, KP
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan (MIAP) co-managed by Ca' Foscari University of Venice and the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East (ISMEO) • Ministry of Culture MIC, Italy • Higher Institute for Conservation and Restoration (ICR-MIC) • Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (TPC-MIC)

Local Counterpart	Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, KP for Culture, Tourism, Archaeology and Museums Department – DOAM, KP
Total Cost	€ 4,159,000
Duration	36 months
General Objective	Contribute to institutional development, provincial and federal, in the field of cultural heritage through capacity building and human resources, in the public and private sectors, and the creation of employment opportunities and social inclusion.
Specific Objective	Improving the cultural heritage sector in the KP through the establishment of equipped conservation/restoration centres, training of specialist staff and the inclusion of local communities in the process of protecting cultural heritage
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six conservation and restoration training centers/laboratories established. • Enhanced capacities in heritage conservation and management. • Strengthened capacity of police forces and customs officers in controlling illicit excavations and the illegal trafficking of cultural property.
Beneficiaries	Direct: Over 400 DOAM KP technical staff, police and customs, university students, and community members. Indirect: Resident communities in KP.

3- Girls' Education - Support to the Female Education Sector and Cultural Heritage Preservation through Education in Pakistan - AID 10875/01/2

This project adopts an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to promote both access to quality education and the safeguarding of cultural heritage through learning. In response to the Covid-19 restrictions, the initiative launched the "Radio My Best Friend" programme, which enabled remote learning via radio broadcasts. This ensured continuity in educational activities while also promoting hygiene and sanitation practices during prolonged school closures.

Aligned with the project's overarching goals, the intervention also incorporates indigenous knowledge of the Kalasha community into risk reduction strategies. These include water channeling, riverbank reinforcement, and soil stabilization efforts. Schools are actively engaged in these activities through outdoor education modules, fostering awareness, resilience, and a strong link between cultural heritage and sustainable development.



Deliberation	N. 111 of 27 october 2016
Zone of Intervention	Province of Punjab, KP, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan.
Financing Channel	Multilateral – Grant
SDGs	SDG 4: Target 4.1, 4.2 - SDG 5: Target 5.5, 5c - SDG 11: Target 11.4
Gender Marker	2
Executing Entity	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO, Departments of Education for Punjab and KP, and the District Education Offices in Bahawalpur and Swat. • Local implementing partners: National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Teacher Resource Centre (TRC) Bahawalpur and Swat; National Integrated Development Association (NIDA). • Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Training, DOAM-KP • Directorate General of Archeology, Walled City Lahore Authority, School Education Department (SED), Government of Punjab • School Education and Literacy Department (SELD), and Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment and Research (DCAR), Government of Sindh, Sindh Textbook Board (STBB), Directorate of Culture, Tourism, Antiquities, and Archives, Government of Sindh • Department of Tourism, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan; National Heritage and Culture Division, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Lok Virsa – National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, Government of Pakistan
Local Counterpart	Directorate of Archaeology and Museums del KP in Culture, Tourism, Archaeology and Museums Department – DOAM, KP
Total Cost	€ 1,500,000
Duration	21st March 2018 to 31st December 2025
General Objective	Support the Governments of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in increasing enrollment rates and improving the quality of girls' primary education through training and targeted interventions at both institutional and community levels, including initiatives related to local cultural heritage.
Specific Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase girls' enrollment in primary schools in the districts of Bahawalpur and Swat through social mobilization. • Reduce dropout rates and improve the quality of girls' primary education in marginalized communities of Bahawalpur and Swat by enhancing the school environment and adopting improved teaching approaches. • Raise girls' enrollment and reduce dropout rates by strengthening the capacity of provincial and district government officials to promote the importance of girls' education within local communities. • Engage young students in cultural heritage conservation activities. • Raise awareness among youth and communities about the importance of preserving cultural heritage. • Promote awareness among local governments on the importance of involving communities in heritage conservation initiatives.
Education - Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased support for girls' education among parents and communities through alliances with political-religious leaders and parties. • Strengthened community-based school management systems through the mobilization and activation of Parents Teacher Councils (PTCs) and School Management Committees (SMCs). • Teachers trained in Activity-Based Learning (ABL) and in Multi-Grade Teaching (MGT). • Schools functioning with qualified teachers and improved learning environments. • Enhanced knowledge and skills of provincial/territorial officials in planning, managing, monitoring, and supervising inclusive education. • Increased awareness among policymakers, parliamentarians, and government officials regarding the legislation and implementation of Article 25-A of the Constitution. • Improved understanding and knowledge of interventions by local partners to ensure effective implementation. • Completion of the research agenda, social research, diagnostic studies, and surveys on girls' enrolment, attendance, performance, and learning outcomes in primary schools.

<p>Culture - Expected Results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and dissemination of promotional and awareness-raising materials. • Strengthened teachers' capacity to appreciate cultural heritage and to promote student volunteerism. • Enhanced capacity of communities living near heritage sites and monuments to initiate safeguarding interventions. • Establishment of community committees/platforms in areas to be safeguarded to report on the state of conservation to relevant government institutions. • Increased public awareness of the importance and respect for cultural heritage and diversity. • Support provided to the Provincial Directorate of Archaeology for the protection of archaeological sites and to the Ministry of Culture, at both provincial and federal levels, to promote heritage education advocacy.
<p>Beneficiaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The direct beneficiaries include at least 8,000 newly enrolled girls, along with 200 teachers, headteachers, members of parent-teacher committees, local partners, and district and provincial officials. • Students and teachers from primary and secondary schools and madrasahs. • Artisans, youth, entrepreneurs, library and cultural center users, tourists, and community members are also among the beneficiaries.

4- Radio Education - Promotion of Learning through Radio in Isolated Areas of Pakistan - AID 12733

In line with the current priorities of the government and UNESCO, aiming to deliver educational/informational content to strengthen community resilience by helping to create a learning, engaging and supportive environment, to encourage motivation and support for school attendance with particular attention to female users. Through the use of interactive radio instruction (IRI), the project aims to provide educational content focused on the themes of Sustainable Development (ESD) of Global Citizenship (GCED), Climate Change and Cultural Heritage Conservation as well as to transmit traditional building techniques to foster greater resilience by mitigating the effects of frequent natural disasters.



<p>Deliberation</p>	<p>N. 116, CC 09/06/2023</p>
<p>Zone of Intervention</p>	<p>Gilgit-Baltistan, KP and Baluchistan</p>
<p>Financing Channel</p>	<p>Multilateral - Grant</p>
<p>SDGs</p>	<p>SDG 3: Target 3.4 - SDG 4: Target 4.1, 4.5, 4.7 - SDG 5: Target 5.b - SDG 11: Target 11.4, 11.b - SDG 16: Target 16.10</p>
<p>Gender Marker</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Executing Entity</p>	<p>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Stakeholders: Ministry of Information, Broadcasting, and Sports; the National Division for Heritage and Culture; the National Commission for UNESCO Pakistan; NAVTTC (National Vocational and Technical Training Commission); the Ministry of Science and Technology; the Provincial Education Department; TEVTA (Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority); the National Institute for Folklore and Traditional Heritage; and the Provincial Directorate of Culture.</p> <p>Public and private implementing entities: PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority), Radio Pakistan PBC (Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation), and USF (Universal Service Fund).</p> <p>Academic institutions: AIOU (Allama Iqbal Open University), NUST (National University of Sciences and Technology), and provincial universities</p> <p>Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): local NGOs and community organizations.</p>

Local Counterpart	Ministry of Formal Education and Professional Training
Total Cost	€ 990,000
Duration	124 months
General Objective	Children, youth, and adults in remote areas of Pakistan are better equipped to tackle the challenges and opportunities within their communities and take appropriate action through education and lifelong learning.
Specific Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance educational opportunities and capacities in schools (students, teachers, and families) through the use of interactive radio programmes. • Raise community awareness and encourage the appreciation and improvement of lifestyles by fostering understanding of multiculturalism, the richness of origins, intangible heritage, and the physical environment, with the aim of safeguarding and transmitting cultural and natural heritage for sustainable development. • Strengthen institutional capacities to engage with citizens, including through distance learning modalities. • Promote partnerships to expand outreach and implementation
Expected Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After-school family learning materials were developed, focusing on Global Citizenship Education (GCED), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), climate-friendly practices, and cultural heritage. • Teachers' pedagogical capacities were strengthened to integrate GCED, ESD, and cultural content into their teaching. • Target school infrastructures were improved, contributing to a more conducive learning environment. • Children's knowledge and skills were enhanced in areas such as life skills, cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), basic technical and vocational education, GCED, and ESD. • Cultural education radio programmes were produced and broadcast to engage youth and children, promote creative learning, safeguard local heritage, and ensure intergenerational knowledge transfer. • Awareness was raised on essential health and hygiene practices and the importance of girls' education. • Provincial information departments received institutional support to promote GCED, ESD, and heritage education. • Human and technical resources were mobilized for effective implementation, with adequate communication of results and ensured visibility. • Regular monitoring and evaluation processes were conducted to assess progress and impact.
Beneficiaries	<p>Direct: 30,000 children aged 5-14 and 75,000 adolescents and adults (including children over 15, teachers, education department officials, parents, and community members) across 300 primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>Indirect: Wider communities and tourists.</p>



Photo Credits: UNESCO

14.4-HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

One project has been approved under Humanitarian Assistance. The details are as follows:

1- Support for Afghan Refugees and Asylum Seekers and Host Communities in Pakistan - AID 013129/01/0

The intervention carried out by UNHCR, with a duration of one year, is implemented in urban and peri-urban areas of Sindh, Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and the capital Islamabad. It aims to provide a comprehensive response to cases of gender-based violence (GBV), while also contributing to the strengthening of child and community protection for approximately 120,000 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in Pakistan. In line with the "Durable Solutions" approach, the intervention includes a component dedicated to improving income opportunities, thus promoting the self-sufficiency of the most vulnerable population groups in the medium to long term. This initiative aligns with the priorities outlined in the 2024-2027 Three-Year Programming and Policy Document, which foresees interventions to strengthen protection systems, including the protection of women exposed to discrimination, abuse, domestic violence, and exploitation.



Deliberation	n. 81 for 19/12/2024
Zone of Intervention	Urban and peri-urban areas in Sindh, Punjab, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the capital Islamabad
Funding Channel	Bilateral
Codification	Emergency, Humanitarian
OCSE-DAC Codes	72010 - Material assistance and rescue services 15180 - Ending violence against women and girls 16010 - Social protection
Sector of Intervention	Protection
Gender Marker	1
Executing Entity	UNHCR Pakistan
Total Cost	€ 1,000,000
Expected Duration	12 months - 1st January 2025 to 31st December 2025
Specific Objective	Ensuring a comprehensive response that addresses gender-based violence (GBV), child protection and community protection while facilitating access to income opportunities for the refugee population, asylum seekers and host communities, Thus increasing the number of self-sufficient individuals.

Expected Results

- The risks of gender-based violence are reduced, the root causes of gender-based violence are addressed and the survivors/s receive quality services.
- Children/s have access to quality child protection services to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Communities, especially women, children/and vulnerable groups, are significantly involved in decision-making through inclusive approaches.
- Refugees, asylum seekers and host communities have increased access to sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Beneficiaries

Direct: The intervention will directly benefit approximately **120,000 individuals** through its various components.

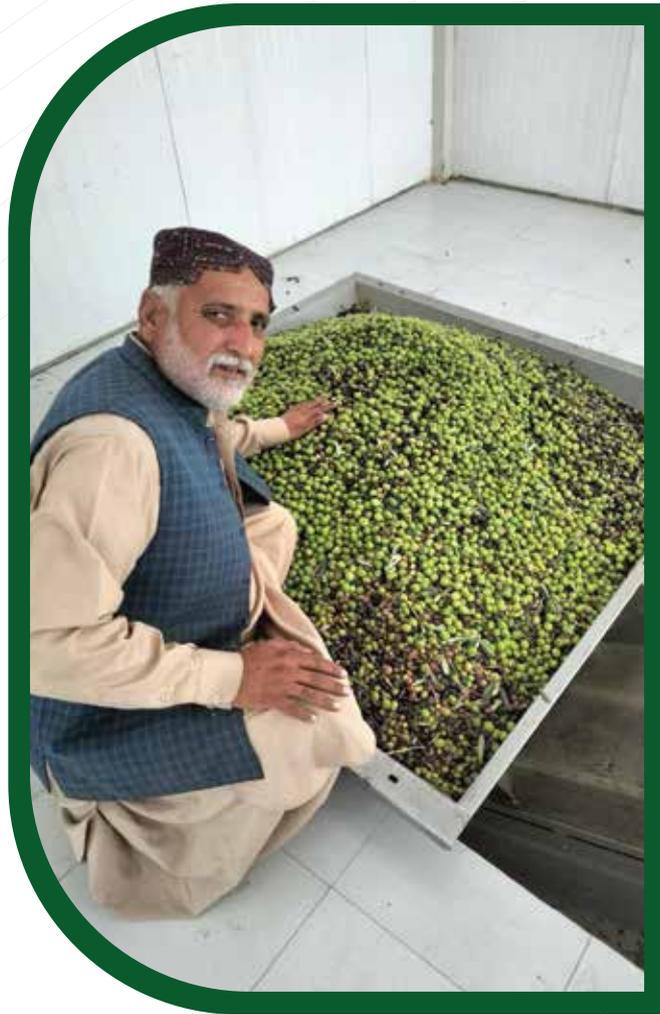
Indirect: The entire registered refugee population in Pakistan will indirectly benefit from the intervention through improved access to gender-based violence prevention and response services, child protection and community-based protection services, and an overall strengthened protective environment.



15- TESTIMONIALS



AHMED KHAN BUZDAR, MUSAKHEL, BALOCHISTAN: "THE FUTURE IS IN THE OLIVE TREE"



**When did you start growing olive trees?
What changes have occurred in his life?**

I planted the first olive trees in 2020. Today I have more than 2000 olive trees, of which 1100 are already producing fruit.

**What kind of support did you receive
from the olive cultivation project?**

Through Oliveculture it was possible to visit the centers of excellence of the CIHEAM Bari network and various olive groves. We learned how to make canned products, how to squeeze olives and how to pack oil. We have seen firsthand how people in Europe carry out these processes.

MUHAMMAD TAYAB KHAN ZAIKHOR OLIVE FARMER



What kind of technical assistance do you receive for olive cultivation?

Every first week of the month, a technician from Olive Culture visits our farm. They inform and advise us on the actions to be taken during the month, based on a seasonal activity calendar—such as which treatments to carry out and which measures to adopt. This way, we are able to maintain our agricultural production.

What message would you like to give to farmers who are involved in the cultivation of olive trees?

I would like to tell all olive farmers that the future of olive cultivation is very promising. The whole of Pakistan is moving towards olive oil, and olives are a crop through which we can bring real change. The market offers excellent opportunities.

SABRINA KHAN, RESEARCHER FROM GILGILT BALTISTAN



Coming from Gilgit-Baltistan, an area characterised by mountains and glaciers, how has your personal connection with the territory influenced your studies and professional orientation?

Growing up in Gilgit-Baltistan, I've always felt a deep connection with the mountains and glaciers surrounding me. They are not just landscapes—they shape our way of life, provide us with water, and define our identity. Seeing them melt and witnessing environmental changes over the years made me realize how urgent it is to study and protect them. This led me to pursue a path in space sciences and GIS, focusing on environmental monitoring and disaster management. I want to use technology to better understand these changes and find ways to protect both the land and the people who depend on it.

What was your role in the “Glaciers and Students” project? How did this project enrich you personally and professionally?

In the “Glaciers and Students” project, I worked on developing a glacier inventory for Pakistan using remote sensing. It was an incredible experience because it combined my passion for science with something deeply rooted in my heritage. I gained hands-on experience in GIS and data analysis while working on something truly meaningful. On a personal level, it was inspiring to contribute to research that can help our region tackle climate change. Professionally, it boosted my confidence in my technical skills and showed me how powerful data can be in creating real solutions.

How have you contributed to the well-being of your community?

I’ve always believed in giving back to my community. Through the Passu Student Association, I helped organize tutoring sessions for students during summer and winter breaks. Education is a powerful tool, and I wanted to ensure younger students had access to the support they needed. I also participated in climate change exhibitions to raise public awareness about environmental issues. In addition, through my work in GIS, I strive to provide data-driven analysis for disaster management and sustainable development in the region.

How do local communities in Gilgit-Baltistan perceive the mountains and glaciers in their daily lives and in relation to their identity?

For us, the mountains and glaciers are everything. They give us water, shape our landscapes, and even influence our traditions and folklore. People see them as sources of life, but also as something sacred. However, in recent years, there has been growing concern. With glaciers melting and natural disasters on the rise, many are becoming increasingly aware of our vulnerability. There’s a mix of deep respect, dependency, and now an urgent need to protect these landscapes.

As a woman, have you faced any challenges in your career?

STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) are still male-dominated, and at times it feels like you have to work twice as hard to prove your worth. But I’ve been fortunate to have great teachers and a strong support system. Over time, I’ve learned that perseverance is key and that the best way to overcome obstacles is to let your work speak for itself. I also hope to be a role model for other young women in my region who are interested in science and technology.

Looking ahead, what are your next goals?

Right now, my main goal is to complete my master’s research on assessing natural hazards caused by climate and tectonics in the Ghizer District. I want to turn my findings into practical strategies that can help communities better manage and mitigate risks. I’m also eager to deepen my skills in machine learning and Google Earth Engine for environmental monitoring. In the long term, I hope to collaborate on international projects focused on climate resilience and sustainable development in mountain regions.

Is there anything else you’d like to add?

I truly believe that science and technology have the power to bring real change—especially in vulnerable regions like ours. I’d love to see more young people, especially women, get involved in STEM and environmental conservation. The challenges we face are immense, but with the right knowledge, we can make a real difference.

SHAHID HUSSAIN, CIVIL ENGINEER, ETI. GILGIT-BALTISTAN.



What are the main infrastructure needs in Gilgit-Baltistan, and what are the key priorities and obstacles?

The main infrastructure needs in the rural areas of Gilgit-Baltistan are roads, to provide access to land and villages. We are prioritizing these needs in our projects. However, the harsh climatic conditions and the frequent closure of the Karakoram Highway force us to halt work during the winter season due to the lack of materials, making it difficult to complete projects in a short time.

How do you engage with local communities to ensure that infrastructure development meets their needs?

Local communities are involved through a structured process that begins with the presentation of a resolution via the local administration, the office of the Deputy Commissioner. Subsequently, a series of meetings are held to ensure community participation and consensus, particularly regarding land distribution, land development, and infrastructure maintenance. The Water Management Department plays a crucial role in ensuring efficient use of water resources, while the Agriculture Department provides support for cultivation and orchard development. Additionally, the Board of Revenue is involved in land use designation and proper property documentation.

What do you see as the long-term impact of infrastructure improvements on the economic and social development of the area?

The long-term impact of road construction will result in improved transportation of agricultural products and access to local markets, leading to increased income. Additionally, the development of irrigation systems will expand arable land, allowing local farmers to increase yields, with a significant rise in earnings and contributing to the overall economic growth of the region.

As someone originally from Gilgit-Baltistan, is it particularly important for you to make a meaningful contribution to your region?

Yes, I am honored to be able to work for my people, and I am very happy to work in this area. I can understand their needs and problems, and as a result, we can facilitate the solution in the right way.



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