

ANNUAL REPORT
2025
PAKISTAN



10 ITALIAN AGENCY
FOR DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
ISLAMABAD OFFICE



DISCLAIMER

This publication strives to use gender-inclusive language to promote inclusivity and respect for all individuals. Our intention is to include all women and girls. AICS promotes gender equality and respect for everyone, regardless of gender.

The designations used and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of AICS regarding the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or its authorities, nor concerning the delimitation of its borders or frontiers.

Cover page photo credits: UNDP Pakistan

Design & layout: Dot Advertising





2025

ANNUAL REPORT

PAKISTAN





Photo credits: UNDP/EK2CNR

1. Pakistan: Geographic Profile	1
2. Socio-Economic Context	4
2.1. Agricultural Sector	7
Focus – Promoting Climate-Resilient Agriculture	
2.2. Challenges and Problems	9
2.2.1. Economic Challenges	9
2.2.2. Livelihood Opportunities	9
2.2.3. Climate Shocks and Natural Disasters	9
2.2.4. Food Insecurity and Nutrition	10
2.2.5. People on the Move	10
2.2.6. Healthcare Sector	11
2.2.7. Status of Women	11
Focus - Floods 2025	13
3. Italian Cooperation in Pakistan	16
3.1. Historical and Cultural Roots	17
3.2. Expanding Horizons: Archaeology and Development	18
3.3. Science, Environment and Community Development	19
Focus - 70 Years of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan	20
4. 2025 - For an Inclusive and Climate Resilient Growth	21
5. Institutional Alignment and Strategic Coordination (2024–2026)	23
6. Pillar – Person: Rural Development and Food Security	26
6.1. Context	27
6.2. Needs Analysis	28
6.3. Approach	29

7. Pillar – Planet: Environment And Climate Change, Risk Reduction	31
7.1. Context	32
7.2. Needs Analysis	34
7.3. Approach	35
8. Pillar – Prosperity	36
8.1. Education, Training, Decent Work	37
8.1.1. Context	37
8.1.2 Needs Analysis	38
Focus - Ecological Conversion of Brick Kilns	41
8.2. Safeguarding and Promoting Cultural and Natural Heritage	41
8.2.1. Context	41
8.2.2. Needs Analysis	42
8.2.3. Approach	43
Focus - Radio Van	
9. Humanitarian Assistance	46
9.1. Humanitarian Situation in Pakistan	47
9.2. Impact of Floods	47
9.3. Food Insecurity and Nutrition	49
9.4. Essential Health Needs	49
9.5. Internal Displacement and Migration	49
9.6. Financial Coverage and Response Capacity	50
Focus - Humanitarian Response: Short to Medium-Term Priorities	51
10. Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment (GEWE)	52
10.1. Context	53
10.2. Needs Analysis	54
10.3. Approach	55
Focus - Monitoring on Gender Equality	56
Focus - 16 Days of Activism, 365 Days of Commitment	58
11. Testimonials	61
12. Portfolio 2025	62
12.1. Grant Initiatives	63
12.2. Soft Loan Initiatives	64
13. Implementing Partners	66
14. Way Forward	67
15. Organogram	68
16. Main Events and Meetings 2025	69
17. Projects	72



Photo credits: ISCO



Photo credits: WFP



Photo credits: FMEQ/Cy Rocca/IMP



Photo credits: ILO

Acronyms

ACC	Afghan Citizenship Card
ADB	Asian Development Bank
FY	Fiscal Year
AICS	Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
APP	Associated Press of Pakistan
AWD	Acute Watery Diarrhea
CIHEAM	International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies
DOAM	Department of Archaeology and Museums
EAD	Economic Affairs Division
ETI	Economic Transformation Initiative
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GHI	Global Hunger Index
GLOF	Glacial Lake Outburst Flood
GST	General Sales Tax
GoP	Government of Pakistan
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOC	International Olive Council
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ISMEO	The International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LMICs	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
MAECI	Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

MAIP	Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan
MoF	Ministry of Finance
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAVTTTC	National Vocational and Technical Training Commission
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NEOC	National Emergency Operations Centre
NEQS	National Environmental Quality Standards
NSP	National Skills Passport
PACRA	Pakistan Credit Rating Agency
PBS	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
PEPA	Pakistan Environmental Protection Act
PIDSA	Pakistan-Italy Debt Swap Agreement
PMA	Pakistan Medical Association
PTDC	Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation
PoR	Proof of Registration
RAFAA	Resilience & Adaptation by Fostering Anticipatory Action
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme



**Pakistan:
Geographic Profile**

01

Pakistan: Geographic Profile

Located in South Asia, Pakistan has an extremely diverse geography, from Himalayan peaks to the Arabian Sea, which helps define its economic potential, climate vulnerabilities, and development priorities.



Mountains

Among the highest mountain ranges in the world: Karakorum, Himalayas, Hindu Kush



Glaciers

Over 13,000 glaciers: the largest concentration outside the polar regions



River System

The Indus Basin: a key resource for agriculture and the water supply of millions of people



Panorama

Thar and Cholistan Deserts, as well as vast arid plateaus to the west



Coast

Approximately 1,000 km on the Arabian Sea; supporting trade and the potential of the blue economy

Pakistan covers over 881,913 square kilometers (WB, 2025)¹. It borders with India, China, Afghanistan and Iran (UNOCHA, 2016)², and from its southern coast it accesses international sea routes that are essential to the economy.



1. World Bank (WB). [Overview: Pakistan](#). 2025

2. UNOCHA. [Pakistan - Province Map](#). 2016



Indus river defines the country's landscape and represents its vital resource. More than three quarters of the population live within its basin, depending on it for irrigation, electricity

generation and water supply. Nevertheless, Pakistan is now among the countries most exposed to **water crises** worldwide. Decreasing river flows, melting snow, and depleting underground aquifers are putting a strain on agriculture and food security.

Climate change has, however, amplified existing vulnerabilities. Catastrophic floods, and increasingly erratic monsoons, demonstrate how extreme weather events can undo years of development progress. The retreat of glaciers in the North increases flood risks, while prolonged heatwaves and water scarcity in Sindh and Punjab threaten livelihoods in areas that have historically been the country's breadbasket.

Urbanization adds another layer of complexity. Expanding metropolitan areas, particularly Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, are increasing pressure on land, energy and water systems. Managing the concurrence of climate change, population growth, and resource scarcity has been a central priority in the government's policies in 2025.



Socio-Economic Context

02

2

Socio-Economic Context



Photo credits: UNDP/EvK2CNR

With an estimated population of **255.2 million** (WB, 2025)³, Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world, characterized by considerable ethnic diversity and rich in natural resources.

However, the economy continues to face significant challenges for the stabilization of the economy and financial balance. Within the framework of the programme supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) - the Extended Fund Facility and the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (IMF, 2025)⁴, the government is called upon to comply with strict fiscal and structural requirements, while having to find the necessary resources to cope with flood damage and climate risks. **During fiscal year 2025, overall fiscal performance showed signs of improvement** (WB, 2025)⁵. Total revenue has in fact risen to 15.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), thanks to the increase in income tax rates,

the reduction of exemptions from the general sales tax (General Sales Tax - GST) and a strengthening of collection activities through efforts to broaden the tax base. As for total expenditure, at 13.4%, it increased to 21.2% of GDP due to the **high interest burden** (7.8%) which **generated an overall fiscal deficit of 5.4% of GDP**.

Pakistan Economic Survey 2024-25, published by the Ministry of Finance (MoF, 2025)⁶, provides a comprehensive update on the country's key macroeconomic dynamics, including sectoral performance and policies adopted to address imitations. The growth rate of the Pakistani economy shown in the document is 2.7% of GDP, compared to the initial target of 3.6%. This shift highlights the persistent **fragility of the recovery and the economy's limited ability to generate strong growth supported by multiple sectors**.

3. World Bank (WB). [DataBank, Population estimates and projections: Pakistan](#). 2025

4. International Monetary Fund (IMF) Pakistan. [Executive Board Completes Second Review](#). December 9, 2025

5. World Bank (WB). [Pakistan Development Update](#). 2025

6. Ministry of Finance (MoF). [Pakistan Economic Survey](#). 2025

Agriculture grew by only 0.56%, reflecting modest productivity gains and strong exposure to climate shocks. This weak performance risks undermining rural livelihoods and food security.

The **industrial sector grew by 4.77%**, but the pace remains insufficient to promote large-scale new job creation. Manufacturing industry contracted by 1.5%, reporting a decrease in supply. In this framework energy constraints and a decline in competitiveness are factors which threaten both exports and jobs in the industrial sector.

Services increased by 2.91%, confirming its position as the main contributor to GDP, although at a rate that signals still subdued domestic demand.

Inflation fell to 4.5% in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, from 23.4% the previous year. Unfortunately, the **resulting benefits have not translated into equally significant poverty reduction**. According to projections calculated on the **national poverty line**, equal to PKR 3,776 per month (approximately USD 0.45 per day) (WB, 2025)⁷, **Pakistan's overall poverty rate for fiscal year 2025 fell to just 22.2% from 25.3% the previous year** (WB, 2025)⁸. That **poverty rate would rise to 44.7%** if the new global poverty lines were taken into account, amounting to USD 4.20 per day for lower-middle-income countries (LMICs). The fact persists that for the World Bank Pakistan's national poverty line remains

the appropriate reference for public policy formulation (WB, 2025)⁹.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan, the country's **public debt is approximately 65% of the entire economy**. A level that is not critical in the immediate term, but which **limits the government's ability to allocate more resources to strategic sectors such as health, education and infrastructure**. A high debt burden also exposes the country to fluctuations in global interest rates and exchange rates, making borrowing more expensive and reducing private sector firms' access to financing.

At the same time, the **government managed to contain the budget deficit to 2.6% of GDP¹⁰**, sign of better control of public finances, although part of this result was achieved through a **reduction in development spending**, with the risk of slowing progress in terms of long-term growth and poverty reduction.

Overall, 2025 was a **year of relative stabilization**. However, widespread poverty, combined with weak growth engines, the incidence of floods that have hit the country again this year, and debt-related pressures, highlights the urgent need for interventions capable of combining macroeconomic stabilization, social inclusion, and sustainable development.¹¹

7. World Bank (WB). [Reclaiming Momentum Towards Prosperity: Pakistan's Poverty, Equity, and Resilience Assessment](#). 2025

8. World Bank (WB). [Pakistan Development Update](#). 2025

9. The global poverty thresholds were updated by the World Bank in June 2025. [Reclaiming Momentum Towards Prosperity: Pakistan's Poverty, Equity, and Resilience Assessment](#). 2025 at pag.14.

10. The budget deficit is at 2.6% of GDP, while the fiscal deficit is 5.4% of GDP.

The fiscal deficit is a subset of the budget deficit, focused on tax revenues (taxes and taxes). The budget deficit considers all revenue (tax revenue and other revenue such as contributions, income from assets, etc.) and all State expenditure (current expenditure and investment).

11. In 2024, Pakistan's deficit was approximately **6.8-6.9% of GDP**, falling to **2.6%**. This was due to reduced fiscal imbalances, reduced pressure on debt and inflation, but achieved through restrictive policies and weak growth.

2.1. Agricultural Sector

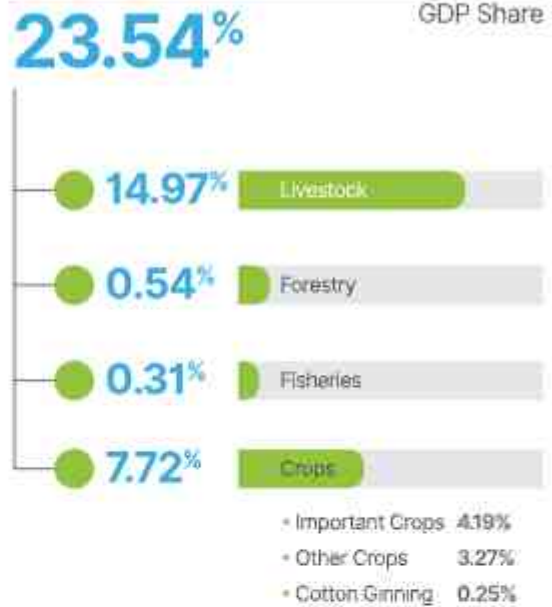
The agricultural sector recorded growth of just 0.56% in the Financial Year - 2024-25, highlighting stagnation and vulnerability despite its central role in the economy. Agriculture's contribution to GDP was 23.54%, and the sector continues to employ over 37% of Pakistan's workforce. The combination of slow growth and the economy's heavy dependence on this sector highlights structural weaknesses, especially in rural areas, where livelihoods depend on agricultural activity. Climate change, water scarcity, limited infrastructure and insufficient access to technology and credit accentuate production risks, hindering the sector's profitability, innovation and competitiveness in the long run.

Agriculture



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) (MoF, 2025)¹²

Agriculture share in GDP



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) (MoF, 2025)¹³

Subsector performance was uneven, as documented by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS, 2025)¹⁴. Livestock grew by 4.72%, reaching 14.97% of GDP, mitigating the overall impact on the sector and providing rural families with a relatively stable income.

Major crops, including wheat, rice, cotton, sugar cane and maize, together contributed about 4.19% of GDP.

Wheat continued to account for a major share of Pakistan's agriculture, contributing about 2.2% of national GDP. However, in fiscal year 202425, overall wheat production decreased by approximately 8.9%, falling to 28.98 million tonnes from approximately 31.81 million the previous year. This reduction in yield underscores the sector's dependence on government support and

12. Ministry of Finance (MoF). *Pakistan Economic Survey*. 2025

13. Ministry of Finance (MoF). *Pakistan Economic Survey*. 2025

14. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). *Agricultural Statistics*. 2025

pricing policies, rather than productivity gains.

Rice production increased by 5.6%, contributing around 0.6% of GDP, supported mainly by export demand. This has raised concerns about excessive dependence on external markets (PACRA, 2025)¹⁵.

The **cotton ginning and processing sector** has shown **strong volatility and cyclical trend** over the last six years. In FY 2024/25, the sector contracted by 19.03%, following exceptional growth of 47.23% the previous year. This decline reflects adverse weather conditions and pest outbreaks.

Structural challenges remain entrenched. Farmers face **rising production costs and shortages of quality seeds and fertilizers**, resulting in weakened profitability. **Climate stress**, including drought, erratic rainfall and flooding, continues to depress yields and discourage investment. **Limited access to modern mechanization** keeps productivity low, especially among small farmers who make up the majority. Furthermore, **price volatility and weak marketing systems** reduce the farmer's revenues, making incomes unstable and contributing to rural poverty.

Focus - Promote Climate-Resilient Agriculture

Within the framework of the **Scale-Up Olive Culture** programme, implemented by CIHEAM Bari and funded by the Italian Cooperation through AICS, a **National Olive Policy** was developed in 2025. The policy is currently awaiting adoption by the federal government, and support was also provided for the establishment of a **National Olive Council**. **With the aim of consolidating and regulating the rapidly growing olive sector** (APP, 2025)¹⁶, such results are part of a broader strategy to promote climate-resilient agriculture and reduce dependence on imports of edible oils, an increasingly urgent need in the face of diversified cultures and lower import costs.

The National Olive Oil Council will serve as the central body for the coordination, certification, quality control and implementation of the national action plan, bringing Pakistan into line with international standards set by the International Olive Oil Council (IOC). Through new training and governance mechanisms, the Council aims to unify industry players, support farmers, promote olive-related tourism and higher value-added products, as well as position Pakistan as



a reliable international producer over the next five to seven years.

In addition to strengthening adaptation to climate change, the olive sector is indeed establishing itself as an engine of rural development and export-oriented growth.

Thanks to the support of AICS, the Olive Scale Up project, carried out by CIHEAM Bari, has enabled a large-scale expansion of olive cultivation on marginal lands and flood-affected areas, which are now home to over 6.9 million trees spread across 60 districts.

15. Pakistan Credit Rating Agency (PACRA). *Sector Study – Rice*. 2025

16. Associated Press of Pakistan (APP). *Govt to Set Up Dedicated Olive Oil Council*. 2025

2.2. Challenges and Problems

2.2.1. Economic Challenges

Despite falling to 4.5% in the 2024-25 FY, inflation continues to weigh on many households due to price increases for essential food goods (PBS, 2025)¹⁷. In July 2025, urban food inflation increased by 2.2%, rural inflation by 1.5%. Some essential goods saw double-digit increases in short periods: fresh vegetables and poultry products grew by 46% and 30% respectively.

2.2.2. Livelihood Opportunities

Political and economic instability in Pakistan, together with high inflation and rising production costs, continues to place significant pressure on rural and low-income households. These economic strains are reflected in an increase in the unemployment rate, which has reached **7.1%**, with marked gender disparities: **6.0% among men and 10.5% among women**.

At the same time, household income capacity shows signs of erosion, limiting purchasing power and economic security. The overall **labour force participation rate** among people aged over 10 stands at **46.3%**, but here too a deep gender gap emerges: **68.7% for men** compared with **22.7% for women**, highlighting how income levels and employment opportunities remain strongly influenced by gender. (PBS, *Labour Force Survey 2025*)¹⁸

2.2.3. Climate Shocks and Natural Disasters

The critical season (November-March), characterized by severe winter weather



conditions with heavy snowfall in many mountain districts, significantly increased food insecurity, hindering access to markets and essential services.

In addition, the 2025 monsoon season, which began at the end of June and continued until September, had **very serious humanitarian and social consequences**. According to estimates by the United Nations and humanitarian agencies, **millions of people were affected by the flooding**, with nearly 7 million people directly impacted and over 4 million forced to leave their homes through formal evacuations and displacement to safer areas.

Extreme rainfall and floods caused **widespread damage to homes, infrastructure, roads, schools, and water**

17. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). *Price Statistics*. 2025

18. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). *Labour Force Survey*. 2024-25



Photo credits: WFP

systems, further worsening access to essential services such as healthcare, safe drinking water, and education, and increasing the vulnerability of already fragile communities. (UNOCHA, 2025)¹⁹.

The agricultural sector has suffered huge losses: in Punjab alone, around 1.3 million acres of main crops have been damaged (Business Recorder, 2025)²⁰, with some districts recording up to 80% loss in cotton production (Tribune, 2025)²¹

2.2.4. Food Insecurity And Nutrition

Despite some progress, **hunger and malnutrition in Pakistan remain alarming**. The Global Hunger Index 2025 ranks the

country **106th out of 123**, with a "serious" level of hunger. Chronic malnutrition particularly affects children: about **40% of those under the age of five are stunted**, with long-term consequences for their physical and cognitive development.

The situation is further worsened by **rising food prices** and declining agricultural yields due to **extreme climate events**, such as floods and droughts, which limit access to nutritious diets. Around **11 million people** are living in acute food insecurity, highlighting how the availability of food does not automatically guarantee adequate nutrition. (GHI, 2025²²; WFP, 2025)²³

2.2.5. People on the move

Political developments continue to result in a marked increase in non-voluntary returns to Afghanistan. On March 7, 2025, the Government of Pakistan announced the resumption of the "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan," initially aimed at Afghans holding the Afghan Citizenship Card (ACC), who have been ordered to leave the country voluntarily by March 31. On July 31, the Government extended the plan to include Afghan refugees holding UNHCR's Proof of Registration (PoR). Between January 1 and December 2025, nearly **1 million people** returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan, contributing to a total of approximately **3 million returnees from abroad**. These flows, which occurred under difficult conditions, have put further pressure on the country's already limited resources and complicated reintegration efforts, increasing the risk

19. UN OCHA. [Pakistan 2025 monsoon floods support plan](#). 2025

20. Business Recorder. [Floods ravage over 1.3mn acres of agricultural land in Punjab](#). 2025

21. Tribune. [Livelihoods and economic stability hang in balance](#). 2025

22. Global Hunger Index (GHI) [Global Hunger Index Scores by 2025 GHI Rank](#). 2025

23. World Food Programme (WFP). [Pakistan](#). 2025



Photo credits: UNDP/EvK2CNR

of new movements, including returns to Pakistan, Iran and other destinations. (UNHCR, 2025)²⁴.

2.2.6. Healthcare Sector

The health sector in Pakistan is facing critical challenges, characterized by **rising medicine prices**, insufficient access to medical services, and persistent public health risks. The Nation's Health Report 2025 by the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) highlighted the growing financial burden on citizens, making essential medicines increasingly unaffordable. The report also emphasizes the need to invest in prevention

and to improve the quality of water, air, and sanitation services. (Dawn, 2025)²⁵. In the same year, Pakistan recorded **30 cases of poliomyelitis**, marking a significant decrease compared with 74 cases in 2024, but remaining one of the few countries where the disease is still endemic. (NEOC data 2025)²⁶. Accumulation of pollutants and structural deficiencies highlight the need for integrated policies to reduce pollution and health risks.

2.2.7. Status Of Women

In 2025, **Pakistan is ranked last in the Global Gender Gap Index** at 148th out of 148 (*Global Gender Gap Report*, 2025)²⁷, and is

24. UNHCR. *Afghanistan Situation*. 2025

25. Dawn. *Country's ailing health sector in dire straits*. 2025

26. Associated Press of Pakistan. *Polio Cases*. 2025

27. World Economic Forum. *Global Gender Gap Report*. 2025

among the five countries with the lowest levels of female economic participation, with estimated incomes less than one third of those of men, limited female representation in senior leadership roles, and a labor force participation rate well below parity. (UN, 2024)²⁸.

The Pakistan Economic Survey 2024-25 says one of the factors driving the strong population growth of the world's fifth most populous country is attributable to the **scarcity of economic opportunities for women and girls**. This factor, combined with limited access to education and reproductive health services, contributes to reducing their effective decision-making autonomy, particularly over family planning (MoF, 2025)²⁹.

The obstacles that women, girls, and young girls face on a daily basis are strongly shaped by illiteracy. More than half (51%) of women and girls are unable to read or write, compared with 30% of men and boys, according to the latest report of the National Commission on the Status of Women. (NCSW, 2023)³⁰.



28. UN. [UN Annual Report](#). 2024

29. Ministry of Finance. [Pakistan Economic Survey](#). 2024-25

30. National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), UN Women. [National Report on the Status of Women in Pakistan](#). 2023 p.17

Focus - Floods 2025



Photo credits: UNICEF Pakistan

Pakistan has effectively become one of the global epicenters of climate vulnerability, consistently ranking among the ten countries in the world most at risk of floods, droughts, Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) and other natural hazards. This vulnerability is amplified by **population pressure**. With approximately 251.3 million inhabitants (WB, 2025)³¹, Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world and **among the most rapidly urbanized in South Asia. Almost half of the country's urban population making up 38% of the total population (WB, 2024)³² lives in informal settlements**, often located along rivers, drainage channels and dry riverbeds (UN Habitat, 2025)³³. Built predominantly with low-resilience materials, such as mud and agricultural waste, these settlements are exposed to extreme flood risks, increasing the

human and economic cost of recurring climate disasters.

Monsoon rains are vital for South Asia, supporting irrigation systems and replenishing critical water reserves. However, their negative impacts have become increasingly severe, driven by rapid urban expansion, inadequate drainage infrastructure, and the growing frequency of **extreme weather events linked to climate change**. Pakistan remains highly exposed: in 2022, the country experienced the worst floods in its history, resulting in over 1,700 deaths (NDMA, 2022)³⁴ and economic losses estimated at approximately USD 30 billion (UN News, 2025)³⁵.

The 2025 floods, though smaller, highlight that such disasters are no longer isolated shocks, but part of an accelerated pattern of climate emergencies.

31. World Bank. [Overview: Pakistan](#). 2025

32. World Bank. [Urban Population Pakistan](#). 2024

33. UN Habitat. [Press release](#). 2025

34. Government of Pakistan Prime Minister's Office National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). [NDMA Floods \(2022\) Situation Report No 137](#). 2022

35. UN News. [The needs are huge: Pakistan reels from floods as millions left homeless](#). 2025

- **Persons affected by floods 2025: over 6.9 million** with approximately **3 million internally displaced persons (IDP)** (UNOCHA, 2025)³⁶
- **Economic damage:** approximately USD 3 billion (IMF, 2025)³⁷
- **Areas affected by the acute diarrhea epidemic (Acute Watery Diarrhea - AWD) /dengue:** main urban centers of Sindh and Punjab provinces (Marham, 2025)³⁸
- **Infrastructure destroyed:** over 229,700 homes, 790 bridges and 2,811 kilometres of roads (UNOCHA, 2025),³⁹ more than 1,000 water supply points damaged of which 464 destroyed (UNICEF, 2025)⁴⁰, hundreds of health infrastructures reported as non-operational (EVK2-CNR, 2025)⁴¹

In 2025, Pakistan faced an exceptionally destructive monsoon season, characterized by persistent and intense rainfall from late June to mid-September. Heavy storms triggered widespread landslides and flash floods in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan, while prolonged river flooding affected Punjab and Sindh. High water volumes across all major river systems—including the Indus River, Sutlej River, Ravi River, Jhelum River, and Chenab River—caused numerous breaches along riverbanks, overwhelming flood-protection infrastructure. Punjab, the country's most populous province with over 130 million people and the agricultural heartland of the nation, experienced the most severe flooding in the past forty years, resulting in extensive damage to livelihoods, crops, and essential infrastructure.



In late September, more than **6.9 million** persons across the country were affected by heavy rains and flooding. Of these, 4.7 million people in Punjab, 1.6 million in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 356,000 in Gilgit-Baltistan and 185,000 in Sindh. Floods have claimed more than **1,000 lives**, including 275 children, with Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recording the highest number of deaths, 304 and 504 respectively.

36. UNOCHA. [Pakistan 2025 monsoon floods support plan](#). 2025

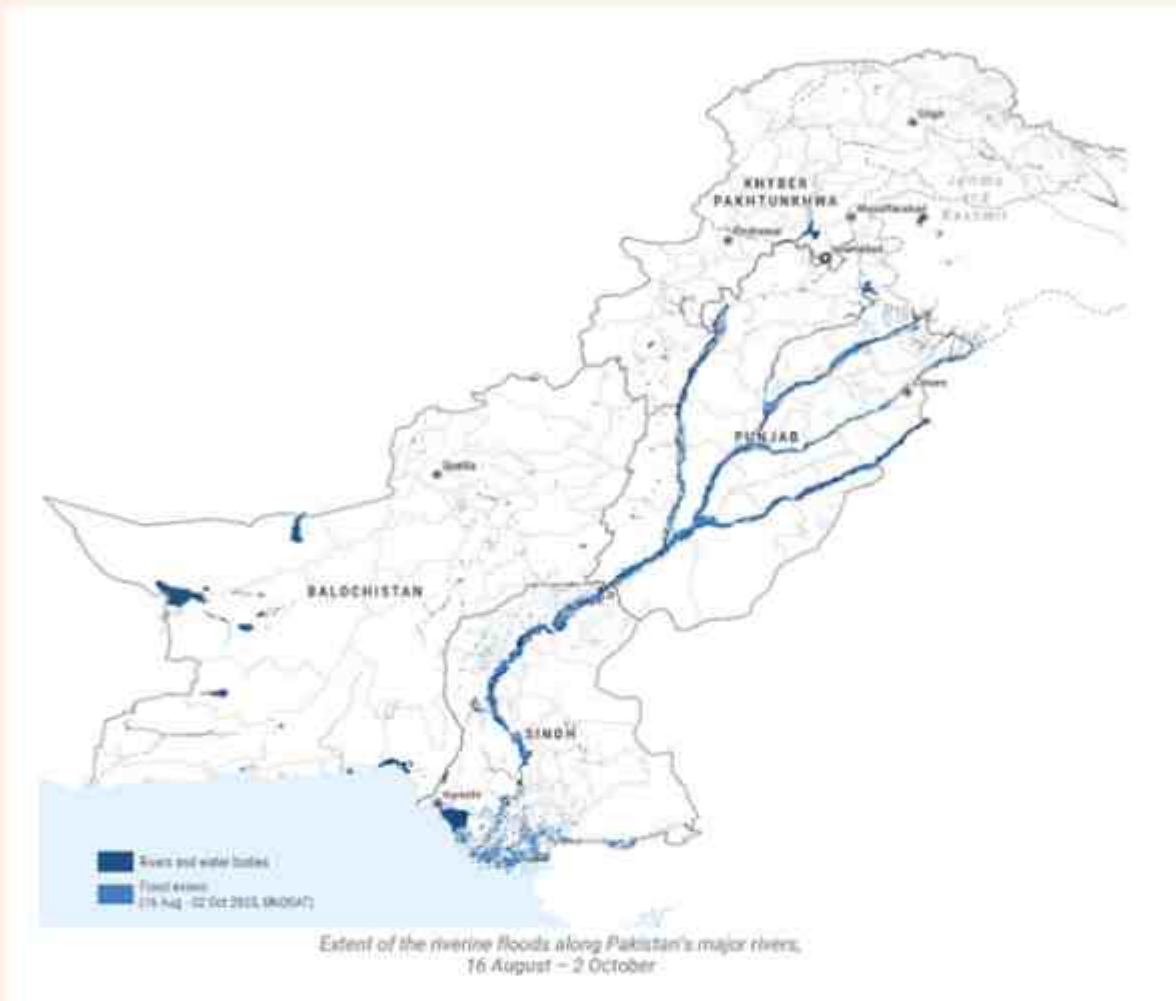
37. International Monetary Fund (IMF). [Country Report No. 2025/332](#). December 2025

38. Marham. [Dengue Fever in 2025: A Growing Health Threat in Pakistan](#). September 2025

39. UNOCHA. [Pakistan 2025 monsoon floods support plan](#). 2025

40. UNICEF Pakistan. [Pakistan Floods 2025 Update](#). 2025

41. EVK2-CNR. [Alluvioni devastanti in Pakistan: il cambiamento climatico come sfida](#). - EvK2CNR. 2025

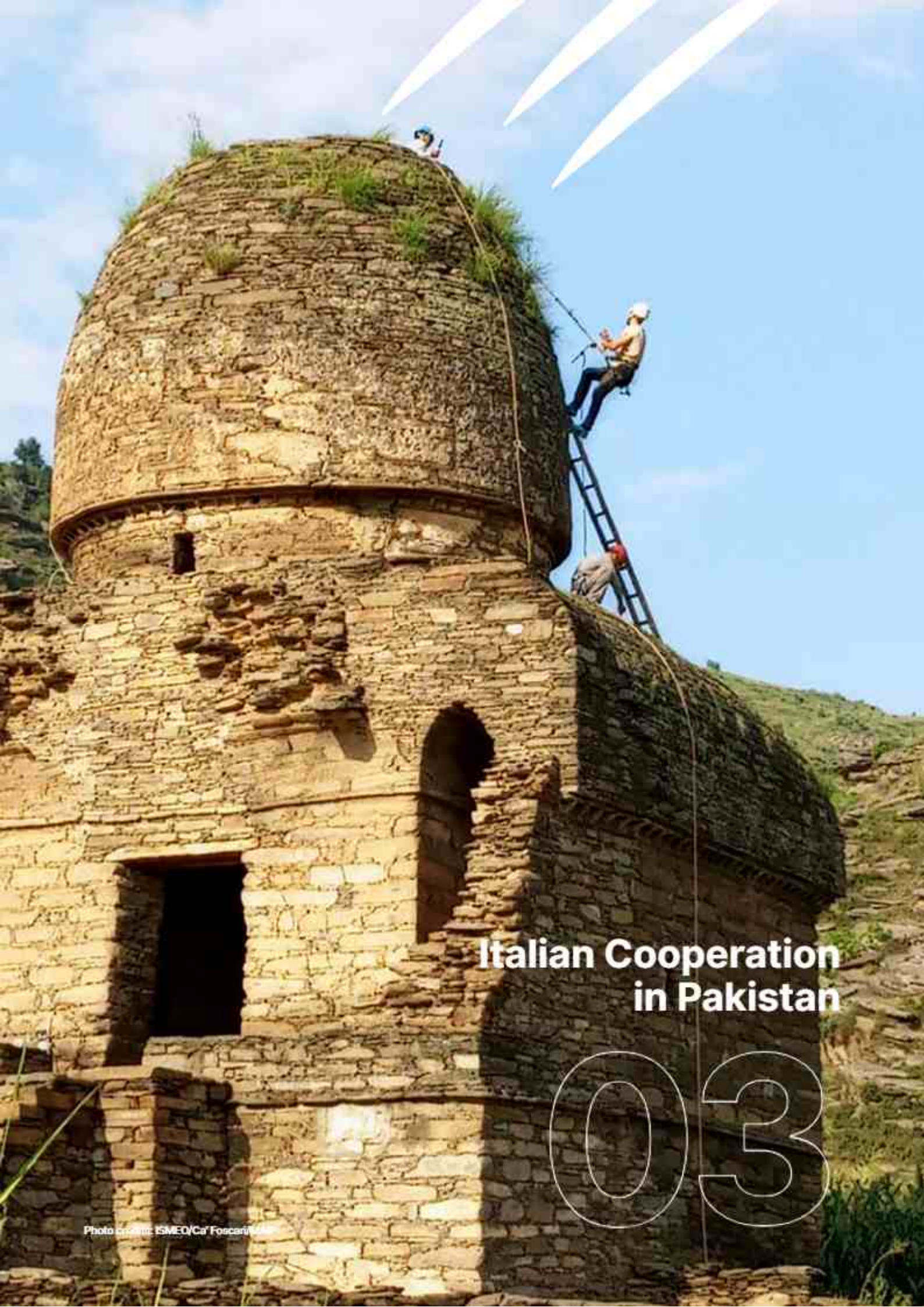


Source: NDMA and UNOCHA Support Plan for Relief and Recovery - 2025 Monsoon Floods. The map above highlights the extent of the floods in light blue.

Of those affected, some **3 million have been displaced**, seeking refuge on higher ground or in the 1,580 evacuation centres set up by provincial authorities. The disaster also caused **widespread damage**

to infrastructure, destroying or damaging over 229,700 homes, 790 bridges and 2,811 kilometers of roads, according to Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) (UNOCHA, 2025)⁴².

42. UNOCHA. [Pakistan 2025 monsoon floods support plan](#). 2025



Italian Cooperation in Pakistan

03

3

Italian Cooperation in Pakistan

Italian Cooperation in Pakistan is one of the most enduring examples of Italy's commitment to international cooperation and development. For over seven decades, Italy has contributed to Pakistan's progress through humanitarian actions, scientific research, cultural heritage conservation, and sustainable development initiatives. Such actions continue to be an important instrument in the framework of bilateral relations.

3.1. Historical and Cultural Roots

The partnership between Italy and Pakistan has its deepest roots in 1955, when **Professor Giuseppe Tucci**, under the aegis of the **Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East (ISMEO)**, founded the **Italian Archaeological Mission** in Swat. This event marked the beginning of a lasting Italian presence in the country's cultural and scientific landscape.

Seventy years of continuous activity are celebrated in 2025, during which the **Italian Archaeological Mission in Swat** has become

a hub for Gandharic art and Buddhist archaeology, contributing over 1,500 scientific publications and training entire generations of Pakistani archaeologists. Sites such as **Barikot** (ancient Bazira) have yielded more than **12,000 archaeological finds**, including sculptures, coins, inscriptions, ceramics, and ornaments, now on display both in the Swat Museum.

The mission, currently **co-managed by ISMEO and Ca' Foscari University of Venice**, and supported by the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)**, represents one of the most prestigious examples of cultural collaboration between Italy and Pakistan. In recognition of these efforts, leading Italian scholars, notably **Giuseppe Tucci, Domenico Faccenna, Gherardo Gnoli, and Luca Olivieri**, have received Pakistan's highest civilian honors, such as the *Hilal-i-Imtiaz* and the *Sitara-i-Imtiaz*.

Italy's archaeological commitment extends beyond Swat. Since 2010, the **Italian Archaeological Mission of Banbhore (Sindh)**, led by the **Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano**, explore one of South Asia's most significant ancient ports, believed to correspond to the medieval port of **Daibul**, Islam's historic gateway to the subcontinent. Excavations have led to extraordinary discoveries, including **ancient ivory laboratories unique in the world**, confirming Banbhore's role as a manufacturing and commercial hub connecting the Indian Ocean with Central Asia.





Photo credit: JOMCO/Car. Francesco MAF

3.2. Expanding Horizons: Archaeology And Development

Within the framework of the development cooperation strategies promoted by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, archaeology represents a tool capable of combining heritage protection, economic growth, and social cohesion. In Pakistan, a country rich in historical testimonies ranging from the Indus Valley civilization to the great centers of Gandhara, the **archaeological**

heritage enhancement as a driver of sustainable development. Research, conservation and specialist training projects provide real opportunities for universities, local communities and industry professionals, while fostering responsible tourism and **skilled employment**. From this perspective, development cooperation supports the transformation heritage into a shared resource for a prosperous future.

3.3. Science, Environment and Community Development

Italy's scientific commitment in Pakistan is also historically recognized in the fields of glaciology and mountain environmental studies. Already in the 1954 expedition to K2, led by **Ardito Desio**, Italy began research on the glaciers of the Himalayas, Karakoram and Hindu Kush, later consolidated through the commitment of the Italian scientific association **Ev-K2-CNR**. These activities have produced pioneering studies on climate change, high-altitude ecology and mountain sustainability, contributing to the strengthening of **Central Karakoram National Park**⁴³ and to the training of Pakistani researchers.

In recent years, Italian Cooperation has supported interventions through the AICS that integrate scientific research, water resources management, and sustainable local development. Through projects such as **Glaciers & Students (2022-2024)**, monitoring of over 13,000 glaciers, environmental protection activities and strengthening the livelihoods of local communities have been carried out. Italy also continues to promote the training of young Pakistanis in glaciology, geomantics, and protected area management, combining natural heritage conservation with inclusive and resilient socioeconomic opportunities, making mountains a model of sustainable development and climate adaptation.



43. EvK2CNR. [SEED](#). 2025; EvK2Pakistan. [Project SEED](#). 2025

Focus - 70 Years of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan



The Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan (MIAP)⁴⁴ was founded in 1955 by Giuseppe Tucci, as a research unit of the ISMEO Centre for Archaeological Studies and Excavations in Asia, with the aim of launching excavation campaigns in unexplored areas, as part of the Heritage Enhancement Programme promoted by the last *Wali*, ruler of the Independent State of Swat, and by the Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM). Since then, thanks to the support of the Italian Government and collaboration with the DOAM of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the Mission has operated continuously, contributing to the rediscovery of the ancient civilizations of Swat and promoting the sustainable development of local communities through training in excavation techniques, restoration and management of archaeological sites. At the same time, the intense scientific activity carried out in the area has given it a leading role in international academic research, with fundamental contributions to the study of Gandharic art and archaeology, historical settlements, funerary archaeology and rock art, documented by approximately 1,500 publications.

Since 2011, the Mission has been directed by Prof. Luca Maria Olivieri and, since 2021, has

been co-managed by ISMEO and Ca' Foscari University of Venice, a partnership that has allowed for the strengthening of scientific research, international coordination and multidisciplinary expertise in the field.

Major works include the restoration of Jahanabad Buddha and Shahi Vishuite Buddhist Temple, as well as recent discoveries at Tokar Dara II and Kandara shrines.

Of particular note is the site of the Indo-Greek acropolis city of Barikot (Bazira) conquered and fortified by Alexander the Great, where, from 1984 to 2024, excavation, conservative restoration and consolidation work was carried out in an area of approximately 7 hectares. The activities brought to light some 12,000 artefacts, restored, catalogued and digitised in collaboration with international experts.

The 70th anniversary of the Mission was celebrated through a series of cultural and institutional events, in a dedicated session at the Lahore Literary Festival and a photographic exhibition during Italian Republic Day in Islamabad. Other events took place in Castel Madama in Rome and Saidu Sharif in Swat itself, where the Ambassador of Italy, Her Excellency Marilina Armellini, participated along with the Pakistani federal and provincial authorities.

44. MAIP. *Missione Archeologica Italiana in Pakistan - MAIP - ISMEO*. 2025



**2025 - For an Inclusive and
Climate Resilient Growth**

04

2025 - For an Inclusive and Climate Resilient Growth

In 2025, AICS Islamabad consolidated a strategic and adaptive approach, capable of responding to Pakistan’s development priorities while addressing needs exacerbated by the effects of climate change and persistent economic challenges. In this context, **AICS continued to focus its interventions on programmes aimed at promoting inclusive growth, building the capacity of institutions and communities and supporting climate-resilient livelihoods.**

The Italian Cooperation’s action is structured around the following priorities: **food security, climate resilience, job creation, and valorization of heritage**, reflecting a broad and coherent vision of sustainable growth and social inclusion.

Food security. AICS contributes to the strengthening of food security in Pakistan through integrated programmes that promote sustainable and resilient agri-food systems. Interventions support small producers, cooperatives and rural communities through improved agricultural techniques, efficient use of water resources and strengthening local supply chains, with a focus on nutrition and livelihood security for vulnerable populations.

Adaptation to climate change. AICS supports Pakistan in building resilience to climate change impacts by promoting sustainable natural resource management, disaster risk reduction and climate-smart farming practices. The initiatives aim to strengthen institutional and community capacities to address extreme climate events and support adaptation strategies at the local level.



Employment and economic development. AICS promotes inclusive economic development by supporting the creation of decent work opportunities and the strengthening of local production chains. Interventions foster entrepreneurship, market access and economic inclusion, with a particular focus on the participation of young people and women.

Technical and vocational training. AICS supports the strengthening of technical education and vocational training (TVET) systems, promoting the development of skills in line with labour market needs. Initiatives include training programmes and institutional partnerships.

Valorization of cultural heritage. AICS contributes to the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage as a lever for sustainable development. Through conservation, restoration and specialist training activities, the programmes aim to strengthen local capacities and promote responsible cultural tourism for the benefit of communities.

An aerial photograph of ancient stone ruins. The most prominent feature is a large, circular stone structure with a central opening, possibly a well or a small tower. It is surrounded by various rectangular and irregular stone foundations and walls. The ground is a mix of dirt, sand, and some sparse green vegetation. The lighting creates strong shadows, highlighting the textures and structures of the ruins.

**Institutional Alignment
and Strategic Coordination
(2024–2026)**

05

Institutional Alignment and Strategic Coordination (2024–2026)

AICS Islamabad's interventions remain fully aligned with the 2024-2026 Three-Year Development Cooperation Programming and Steering Document (MAECI, 2025)⁴⁵ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

According to the three-year document, Pakistan, one of the most populous countries in the world and a major source of migration flows to Italy, will continue to benefit from strategic and targeted attention. The commitment will be further strengthened in priority areas such as vocational training, sustainable agriculture, water management and protection of natural and cultural heritage. In those areas, it is intended to promote inclusive economic growth, expand opportunities for vulnerable youth and communities and strengthen the country's human capital to address the root causes of migration.

Based on the AICS Theory of Change, all initiatives are relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly on three thematic pillars: **Person, Planet, Prosperity**. Within this framework, AICS identified four outcomes that guide the intervention strategy:

Pillar Person

Outcome 1 (SDG 2): Ensure food security and support sustainable and resilient agri-food systems, promoting the link between nutrition and health.

Sector: Rural development and food security.

Pillar Planet

Outcome 2 (SDG 13.1): Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate risks and natural disasters.

Sector: Environment, climate change and risk reduction.

Pillar Prosperity

Outcome 3 (SDG 8.5): Promote full and productive employment and decent work, with a focus on youth and women.

Sector: Education, training and decent work.

Outcome 4 (SDG 8.9 - 11.4): Increase the protection of cultural and natural heritage.

Sector: Conservation and valorization of cultural heritage.

AICS engagement in Pakistan is fully consistent with the **strategic priorities of the Government of Pakistan** and with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027**. Pakistan has demonstrated a strong and sustained commitment to the 2030 Agenda by integrating SDGs into its development plans. This vision has been renewed through the Uraan Pakistan Programme National Development Plan - 2024-2029.

AICS contributes to this national agenda by supporting the implementation of the relevant action and policy plans, including the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation

45. MAECI. [Documento Triennale di Programmazione e di Indirizzo della Cooperazione allo Sviluppo 2024-2026](#). 2025



Plan (2023-2030), the Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (2023), and the National Food Security Policy (2018).

The AICS priorities are also consistent with the **objectives of the European Union**, in particular the Multi-Year Indicative Programme 2021-2027. In addition, AICS is actively participating in the Team Europe Initiative (TEI) entitled Building Back Better through Green Jobs Creation, contributing two projects⁴⁶.

The Office also operates taking into account the **strategic framework of the World Bank**, the Country Partnership Framework (FY26–FY35), which defines Pakistan’s key priorities for sustainable and climate-resilient growth.

Coordination with Pakistani institutions and international partners is a central activity for the effectiveness of Italian Cooperation interventions.

Dialogue with the government counterpart, represented by the Ministry of Economic Affairs through the Economic Affairs Division (EAD), ensures alignment with government strategies and contributes to aid coordination through the quarterly Portfolio Review

mechanism. This bilateral meeting shall be attended, at the invitation of the EAD, by representatives of the local administrations implementing or partner in ongoing and planned initiatives.

In agreement with the Embassy, AICS Islamabad also participates in key **coordination platforms**, including:

- **EU Development Counsellors Meeting**, on call from the EU;
- The **Development Partners Group** on a monthly basis and chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC), the EU and the World Bank.
- The **Donors Coordination Committee** chaired by the EAD Secretary on a six-monthly basis.

In addition, **AICS participates in theme groups**, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Water Donor Coordination Committee and the World Bank-led Donor Coordination Committee on Climate Change, in order to help increase synergies and coherence of intervention among development partners.

46. The projects are “Water for Development: Supporting Sustainable Mountain Development and Adaptation Policies (W4D)” implemented by UNDP Pakistan and “Expanding the Olive Oil Supply Chain and Promoting Climate Resilient Rural Development in Pakistan (Olive Scaleup)” implemented by CIHEAM Bari.



**Pillar Person: Rural
Development and
Food Security**

06

6

Pillar Person: Rural Development and Food Security

6.1. Context

In Pakistan, agriculture remains a cornerstone of the national economy and rural livelihoods. The agricultural sector contributes approximately **23-24% of Gross Domestic Product**, with an estimated share of **23.5% in 2024-25**, confirming its structural importance in the country's economy (MoF, 2025)⁴⁷. In addition, agriculture employs over **37% of the national labour force**, representing the main source of employment, especially in rural areas where a large part of the population depends on agricultural or related activities (MoF, 2025)⁴⁸. The sector has strong links with foreign trade: **around 70% of exports are directly or indirectly linked to agriculture**, including crops such as rice, cotton and processed food products (FAO, 2026)⁴⁹. Within the sector, the livestock sector is particularly significant, contributing substantially to total agricultural production.

In recent years, agriculture has been severely affected by extreme climate events. The 2022 floods affected dozens of districts and caused approximately \$30.1 billion in damage and losses, including \$12.9 billion in agriculture alone; the crop sector accounted for approximately 82% of agricultural damage, with lasting impacts on irrigation systems, soil, and rural infrastructure (FAO, 2022)⁵⁰.

The latest floods in 2025 have once again affected the country, with severe damage to agriculture, particularly in Punjab province, where a significant portion of crops have been destroyed. Heavy downpours and flooding of rivers have submerged **over 900,000 hectares of arable land**, affecting key crops and rural infrastructure, and causing direct losses to the agricultural economy estimated at about \$1 billion (UNOCHA, 2025)⁵¹. The Government estimated that the overall damage from the floods was equivalent to about **0.6% of GDP**, with adverse effects on national economic growth and agricultural productivity in the following months (IMF, 2025)⁵². These impacts have also fueled concerns about food security, rural incomes, and supply chains in the agricultural sector.

The combination of climate vulnerability, population growth and degradation of natural resources makes the food insecurity faced by approximately 40% of the population chronic. 82% cannot afford a healthy diet, and nearly half of average household spending goes on food (WFP, 2025)⁵³. In Balochistan, Sindh and KP provinces alone, almost 10.5 million people are in crisis or acute food insecurity emergency phases and some 2.14 million children suffer from acute malnutrition in the worst affected areas (IPCINFO, 2025)⁵⁴.

47. Ministry of Finance (MoF). [Pakistan Economic Survey, 2025](#)

48. Ministry of Finance (MoF). [Agriculture Outlook, 2024-25, 2025](#)

49. FAO. [Pakistan at a Glance, 2026](#)

50. FAO. [Post Disaster Needs Assessment \(PDNA\), 2022](#)

51. UNOCHA. [Pakistan 2025 Monsoon Floods - Summary Report: After Action Review - Lessons Learned Survey \(December 2025\)](#). 2026

52. International Monetary Fund (IMF). [Country Report No. 2025/332](#). December 2025

53. World Food Programme (WFP). [Pakistan, 2025](#)

54. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. [Asia - Pakistan, 2025](#)

Structurally, rural development is hampered by land fragmentation, outdated irrigation systems, limited access to credit and insufficient agricultural extension services, in a context of severe pressure on water resources and soil (FAO, 2025)⁵⁵. Furthermore, gender inequalities remain marked: women living in rural areas are largely excluded from land ownership and face significant obstacles in accessing credit, agricultural advisory services and technical training, while playing a key role in agro-pastoral supply chains and processing activities (IFAD, 2024)⁵⁶.

In this context, strengthening rural development and food security requires integrated investments in resilient infrastructure, climate-smart agriculture, climate-sensitive social protection systems, and technical training programs targeting high-value agricultural supply chains, in line with the strategies of key international bodies (UN, 2022)⁵⁷.

6.2. Needs Analysis

The needs analysis highlights cross-cutting priorities that exceed the mere response to the 2025 floods, requiring structural strengthening of the rural system to complete and consolidate the restoration of sectoral infrastructure, increasing resilience to major climate events, and improving operational efficiency in line with the sectoral and macroeconomic performance highlighted in the Pakistan Economic Survey 2024-25 (MoF, 2025). In the agricultural sector, overall growth was subdued (+0.56%), with significant increases in the livestock sector (+4.7%) and declines in main crops such as



cotton, maize and wheat, highlighting the need for targeted **strategies to increase productivity, diversification and climate resilience** (MoF, 2025)⁵⁸.

Pakistan's agricultural sector faces significant challenges related to climate variability, limited productivity, and poor financial inclusion, which require targeted interventions. Farmers need effective **climate early warning systems** and **Climate Smart Agriculture** practices that can stabilize yields and reduce post-harvest losses, as outlined in the FAO Country Programming Framework 2023-2027 (FAO, 2025)⁵⁹.

It is equally urgent to develop specific technical expertise throughout the rural sector. The training of young people

55. FAO. *Pakistan at a glance*. 2025

56. IFAD. *Investing in women and girls makes economic sense and accelerates progress for millions of people*. 2024

57. UN. *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027 for Pakistan*. 2022

58. Ministry of Finance. *Agriculture Outlook*. 2024-25

59. FAO. *GIEWS - Global Information and Early Warning System*. 2025

and agricultural workers, through **TVET programmes geared towards sustainable agriculture and high value-added supply chains**, such as the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme, is a key step in fostering the adoption of innovative technologies and ensuring employability in rural areas (NAVTTTC, 2025)⁶⁰.

The still fragmented rural financial system requires appropriate credit instruments, agricultural insurance and microfinance, so as to enable farmers to invest in resilient technologies and strengthen their economic security, in line with the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2025)⁶¹.

Finally, high-value-added crop chains, such as olives and fruit growing, need interventions to improve quality, quantity, and food security standards, as well as consolidate market linkages and reduce post-harvest losses, essential conditions for fostering sustainable rural growth, as highlighted in the Pakistan Economic Survey 2024-25 (MoF, 2025)⁶².

6.3. Approach

AICS's engagement in Pakistan is embodied through an integrated rural development and food security strategy, aimed at strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable communities, in full coherence with local government policies and the Sustainable Development Goal 2 "**Zero Hunger**".

The strategy aims to strengthen and **diversify agri-food value chains by leveraging local potential and promoting a sustainable**



Photo credit: Muhammad Mughal, OESVI

increase in both productivity and the quality of production.

At the core of the approach is the development of **human capital** through certified and advanced technical training programs, aimed at transferring up-to-date skills in production management, technological innovation, and climate-resilient agricultural practices. Training serves as a cross-cutting tool to strengthen the capacity of local communities to independently manage more efficient production processes, diversify agricultural activities, and respond to economic and climate-related risks.

The strategy also supports institutional and technical strengthening of supply chains, promoting the adoption of international standards and adaptation to sectoral regulations, thus increasing producers'

60. National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC). *Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Program*. 2025

61. International Monetary Fund (IMF). *Country Report No. 2025/332*. December 2025

62. Ministry of Finance (MoF). *Pakistan Economic Survey 2024-25*. 2025



competitiveness and promoting access to profitable markets. Particular attention is paid to **agricultural diversification**, encouraging complementary and innovative production systems capable of reducing the vulnerability of rural communities and increasing overall food security.

At the territorial level, in the provinces of **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Punjab**, AICS contributes to strengthening strategic supply chains and increasing local resource efficiency, with the aim of **creating resilient and sustainable production ecosystems**.

In **Gilgit-Baltistan**, actions are geared towards reducing rural poverty through infrastructure development, upgrading irrigation systems and adopting climate-adaptive farming practices.

In summary, the AICS strategy aims to build a **sustainable and competitive agricultural ecosystem**, where the valorization of human capital, productive diversification and adaptation to standards constitute fundamental levers for improving productivity, to reinforce local value chains and facilitate access to remunerative markets, while simultaneously contributing to food security and the well-being of rural communities.



**Pillar Planet: Environment
And Climate Change,
Risk Reduction**

07

Pillar Planet: Environment and Climate Change, Risk Reduction

7.1. Context

Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to climate change, increasingly affected by extreme events such as floods and droughts. According to the Environmental Performance Index, Pakistan **ranks 179th out of 180 countries, confirming alarming environmental risks** (EPI, 2024)⁶³. The World Bank has estimated dramatic consequences of environmental degradation and pollution in Pakistan, predicting a reduction in GDP of 18-20% by 2050 (WB, 2022)⁶⁴.

One of the main environmental disasters affecting the country is flooding. According to the **INFORM Index for Risk Management**, river flood risk 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 (EU, 2025)⁶⁵. Two of the most devastating events have occurred in the last five years. The 2025 monsoon floods in Pakistan, which occurred between June and September, affected large areas of the country, causing at least 1,006 deaths and 1,063 injuries, according to official data (NDMA, 2025)⁶⁶. Agricultural productivity was significantly reduced, as water submerged 9%, 6% and

2% of cultivated land in Punjab, Sindh and KP provinces respectively (FAO, 2025)⁶⁷. The 2022 floods were even more devastating. According to the post-disaster needs assessment, torrential rains, accelerated melting of glaciers and landslides have resulted in economic damage amounting to \$14.9 billion (MoPD&SI, 2025)⁶⁸.

While river flooding is the main disaster affecting the plains, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) pose a serious risk to communities living in mountainous regions. Climate change, rising temperatures, and intensifying precipitation contribute to the occurrence of GLOFs. Northern Pakistan is home to over 13,000 glaciers (EvK2CNR, 2024)⁶⁹ and approximately 3,000 potential GLOF sites, of which 36 are considered vulnerable and 4-5 are at high risk of flooding (NDMA, 2025)⁷⁰.

Floods not only destroy assets, infrastructure and livelihoods, but also severely degrade ecosystems and natural resources through soil erosion, habitat destruction and water pollution. Pakistan is among the countries most subject to water stress globally (FAO, 2023)⁷¹ and is set to face absolute

63. Environmental Performance Index 2024 (EPI). [Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy](#). 2024

64. World Bank (WB). [Country Climate and Development Report](#). 2022

65. European Commission (EU). [INFORM Risk Mid 2025](#). 2025

66. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). [NDMA - Monsoon 2025 Daily Situation Report No. 86](#). September 2025

67. FAO. [Flood Impact Assessments](#). 2025

68. Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives. [Pakistan Floods Post-Disaster Needs Assessment 2022](#). 2022

69. EvK2CNR. [The new inventory of 13,032 glaciers in Pakistan: the "Glacier & Students" Project](#). 2004

70. National Disaster Management Authority of Pakistan. [GLOF Guidelines 2025](#). 2025

71. FAO. [AQUASTAT Dissemination System](#). 2023.



Photo credits: UNDP/E-SDGIR

scarcity by 2035 (IOM, 2024)⁷². Per capita water availability is declining rapidly due to population pressures and climate change, while **concerns about water quality** are also growing. Recent studies highlight that drinking water in Pakistan is frequently contaminated, with estimates suggesting that in some areas up to 80% of supplies are unsafe for consumption (Ishaque et al., 2024)⁷³.

Furthermore, despite Pakistan's efforts to reduce emissions (GoP, 2025)⁷⁴, The country continues to struggle with **poor air quality**, ranking as the **most polluted country in the world** (IQAir, 2025)⁷⁵. Air pollution

is responsible for approximately 22,000 premature deaths (Anjum et al., 2021)⁷⁶ and contributes to the increase in cases of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases (Iram et al., 2025)⁷⁷.

Major urban centres record the highest levels of pollution (Dawn, 2025)⁷⁸, but the problem is also present in the mountainous area, especially in the domestic environment, where women and children are more exposed and vulnerable. A recent study conducted in Gilgit-Baltistan showed that indoor levels of PM2.5 and carbon monoxide (CO) are five and three times higher than national environmental quality standards (NEQS),

72. International Organization of Migration (IOM). *Flooded yet thirsty: Climate disaster and water access in Pakistan during 2022-2023*. 2024

73. Ishaque et al. *Water management and sustainable development in Pakistan. Sec. Water and Human Health*. 2024

74. Government of Pakistan (GoP). *Pakistan's Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC3.0)*. 2025

75. IQAir. *Air quality in Pakistan: Pakistan global rank in pollution 2024*. 2025

76. Anjum et al. *An Emerged Challenge of Air Pollution and Ever-Increasing Particulate Matter in Pakistan*. 2025

77. Iram et al. *Impact of Air Pollution and Smog on Human Health in Pakistan*. MDPI Environments. 2025

78. Gabol. *Lahore ranked world's most polluted again as AQI soars to 386*. Dawn e-paper. 2025

respectively (Iram et al., 2025)⁷⁹, stressing the need for interventions and strategies aimed at reducing indoor pollution.

7.2 Needs Analysis

In response to the need to strengthen the resilience of rural communities through **anticipatory interventions integrated with multi-risk warning systems**, capable of reducing economic and human losses, Adaptation Plans have been developed at the national and provincial levels (MoCC&EC, 2023)⁸⁰ (GoPJ, 2024)⁸¹, with emphasis on local actions and community risk management (CBDRM). However, the process is still in its infancy and requires more coordination. Complementary measures such as **agricultural insurance** and **social protection** remain essential to address extreme climate risks.

As water availability decreases due to population pressures and climate change, it becomes essential to **monitor resources and improve usage efficiency**. Because the river basin is fed mainly by snow and melting glaciers (ICIMOD, 2024)⁸², integrated glaciological and hydrological models are critical to predict future supply and ensure effective water quality monitoring systems.

In a vulnerable and at-risk context, however, it is necessary to consider the livelihoods of the population. Environmentally friendly employment opportunities are therefore crucial for economic growth in a changing climate, and **sustainable tourism** represents a strategic opportunity to engage local

communities and protect the environment. Tourism is experiencing a strong expansion in the country, with an estimated annual growth rate of 6.75% (Gulf News, 2025)⁸³ and governance of it becomes more crucial than ever. To ensure long-term sustainability, focus must be placed upon green infrastructure, strong environmental protections and strong community involvement.

As part of its international climate commitments, Pakistan submitted its **third Nationally Determined Contribution in 2025 (NDC 3.0)**⁸⁴, under the Paris Agreement, committing to reduce **greenhouse gas emissions by up to 50% by 2035**. Part of this reduction is foreseen through national resources, while the remaining share depends on financial and technological support international. Achieving these goals therefore requires **innovative financial mechanisms** that can support the transition to a low-carbon economy.

In this context, the development of **carbon markets** can represent a relevant tool to promote investments in projects that ensure **criteria for additionality, measurability and verifiability of emission reductions**. Such instruments can also foster integrated **sustainable natural resource management**, ecosystem conservation and **ecotourism** development initiatives, contributing to the diversification of local economies and the **valorization of natural capital** and the strengthening of the resilience of local communities.

79. Iram et al. *Impact of Air Pollution and Smog on Human Health in Pakistan*. MDPI Environments. 2025

80. Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination (MoCC). *National Adaptation Plan Pakistan*. 2023

81. Government of Punjab (GoPJ). *Punjab Climate Change Policy and Action Plan*. 2024

82. Int. Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. *ICIMOD Importance of glaciers for water availability in Pakistan 2021*. 2024

83. Gulf News. *Pakistan's travel, tourism projected to generate \$4 billion in 2025*. 2025

84. Government of Pakistan (GoP). *Pakistan's third Nationally Determined Contribution*. 2025

7.3 Approach

Within the Pillar Planet's Theory of Change (TOC), AICS promotes adaptation strategies and responsible resource management through an integrated approach. These interventions directly support SDG 13 (Climate Action), with a focus on **Target 1: Building resilience and adaptive capacity to climate risks and natural disasters in all countries.**

In line with the COP30 commitment to expand adaptation efforts (UNFCCC, 2025)⁸⁵ and with the aim of modernizing the response capacity of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (NDMA, 2025)⁸⁶, AICS Islamabad aims to **strengthen the resilience of communities and institutions to climate risks and natural disasters through the adoption of advanced warning systems and anticipatory actions.**

In **Sindh**, AICS strives to mobilize and strengthen communities and institutions to anticipate, address, and respond to the impacts of climate change, integrating anticipatory actions, nature-based solutions, and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

In **Gilgit-Baltistan**, AICS works to promote the sustainable development of mountain areas, in collaboration with UN, civil society organizations, institutions and local authorities. Interventions focus on strengthening the management of natural resources, particularly water, and improving income opportunities in agriculture, livestock, and eco-tourism.

In **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**, AICS focuses its



commitment on the intersection of climate adaptation, construction and tourism. In line with Pakistan's Decent Work Country Programme (ILO, 2023)⁸⁷, the activities focus on vocational training and entrepreneurial development, with emphasis on sustainable construction and ecotourism as drivers of resilience and decent work.

AICS mainstreams gender into its interventions, recognizing the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and vulnerable groups, as highlighted by the Gender Action Plan 2026-2034 adopted at COP30 (COP30, 2025)⁸⁸. The actions aim to create employment for women and young people and encourage their participation in the management of natural resources, strengthening their role in decision-making processes and economic activities.

85. UNFCCC. *Global Mutirão: Uniting humanity in a global mobilization against climate change, draft decision. COP30*. 2025

86. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). *National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2025-2030*. 2025

87. ILO. *Decent work Country Programme for Pakistan 2023-2027*. 2023

88. COP 30 agenda item 14. *Belém gender action plan, draft decision*. 2025



Pillar Prosperity

08

8

Pillar Prosperity

8.1. Education, Training, Decent Work

8.1.1. Context

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines decent work as employment that ensures a fair income, safe working conditions, social protection, and respect for workers' rights. In Pakistan, achieving this goal remains a complex challenge, conditioned by economic, social and climatic factors.

The unemployment rate is high and growing. It went from 6.3% recorded in the two-year period 2020-2021 to 7.1% in 2024-2025 (PBS, 2025)⁸⁹. The figure shows a particularly critical situation for young people (15-24 years) facing greater difficulties in accessing the labour market and for whom the unemployment rate reaches 12.8%.

According to ILO, the informal economy comprises over half of the global workforce and in Pakistan the share of **employment in the informal sector exceeds 80%** (PBS, 2025)⁹⁰, forcing most workers to operate without formal contracts, social protection or security guarantees.

Child and bonded labour continue to be widespread phenomena of the informal economy. According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) of Pakistan 2024-25, approximately 1.8 million children between the ages of 10 and 14 are engaged in economic

activities, while workers falling into modern slavery are estimated at 3.1 million people (NCHR, 2023)⁹¹. Both categories are mainly employed in agriculture or informal activities such as brick kilns or housework.

The construction sector, and in particular the brick industry, has serious shortcomings with respect to fundamental principles and workers' rights. High informality, the absence of trade unions and poor enforcement of occupational health and safety regulations, make workers extremely vulnerable (ILO, 2022)⁹². Additionally, furnace emissions exacerbate environmental pollution: not only do they generate unsafe working conditions, but they also contribute significantly to the deterioration of air quality across the country.

The data on gender disparity in the labour market are particularly worrying. Female participation, estimated at 21%, is well below the global average of 39%. A wide pay disparity also emerges between men and women reaching 25% in the formal sector, and 38% in the informal sector (ILO, 2025)⁹³. The gap has its roots in the education sector and is amplified in the transition to employment: only 30% of women with an education level of grade 12 or higher are active in the labor market, compared to 83% of men (UNW, 2023)⁹⁴.

89. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. [Labour Force Survey](#). 2025

90. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. [Labour Force Survey](#). 2025

91. National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR). [The Issue of Bonded Labour in Pakistan 2023](#). 2023

92. ILO. [A study of deficits in the fundamental principles and rights at work in the brick supply chain](#). 2022

93. ILO. [The gender pay gap in Pakistan](#). 2025

94. UN Women. [National report on the status of women in Pakistan](#). 2023

Religious minorities are another vulnerable group. **Despite the protections guaranteed by the Constitution**, continue to suffer persecution and discrimination in the labour market (CSOH, 2025)⁹⁵, with occupations often confined to the informal and low-skilled sectors. Social barriers and prejudices limit their access to better-paid positions, compromising their economic and social security.

8.1.2 Needs Analysis

The main challenge remains that of informality. **To achieve a fair and just transition, it is essential to increase the formalization of work, thus ensuring access to health and social protection mechanisms.** At the same time, safer working conditions must be ensured, particularly in sectors most exposed to risks such as construction and agriculture, and illegal practices such as child and bonded labor must be decisively combated.

The criticalities of the labour market also stem from a **marked gap between the skills required and those actually available, especially in the professional sectors.** For this reason, it is a priority to strengthen the technical and vocational education system, proposing quality curricula aligned with market needs. It is equally crucial to increase women's involvement in the country's productive fabric, enhancing a potential that is still largely untapped.

Finally, to ensure equal opportunities for religious minorities and foster greater social and economic inclusion, it is necessary to **promote interreligious dialogue accompanied by education and training programs dedicated to the most vulnerable groups.**

8.1.3 Approach

To address these challenges, AICS interventions in the area of Education, Training and Decent Work are consistent with the objectives of the Pillar Prosperity of the Theory of Change (TOC) of AICS, contributing to the achievement of SDG 8 and, in particular, **target 8.5: Achieving full and productive employment and ensuring decent work for all women and men.**

In line with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in May 2025 between Italy and Pakistan regarding labor migration and mobility (MoFA, 2025)⁹⁶, AICS aims to strengthen cooperation on **vocational training and skills development.** This is also done through the promotion of innovative tools such as the **National Skill Passport (NSP, 2025)**⁹⁷, which facilitates the recognition of acquired skills and facilitates access to decent, regular and secure employment opportunities, both at home and abroad.

In **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**, actions focus on the transition to a more sustainable economy, through the modernization of brick kilns to reduce environmental impact and improve working conditions. In parallel, vocational training programmes and access to employment in the sustainable construction and ecotourism sectors are being strengthened, with a special focus on women and young people. Tourism, in particular, is configured as a motor of **social inclusion and female empowerment**, offering concrete opportunities for enhancing skills and economic autonomy. These interventions contribute to the development of specialized skills and are accompanied by the **issuance of professional certifications**, expanding

95. Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH). *Systemic Persecution of Religious Minorities in Pakistan*. 2025

96. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). Government of Pakistan. *Press Release*. 2025

97. *National Skill Passport* (NSP) Pakistan. 2025



employment opportunities in growing sectors and strengthening social cohesion.

In **Punjab**, the focus is on the socio-economic inclusion of the most vulnerable communities, such as sanitation workers, through increased access to essential services,

vocational training and improved working conditions. Employment opportunities for young people and adults are being enhanced, while promoting an enabling environment for interfaith dialogue and social cohesion.



Focus - Ecological Conversion Of Brick Kilns

The Punjab Furnace Case Study

The project “Promoting Decent Work Opportunities for the Economic Strengthening of Vulnerable Segments of Society,” implemented by ILO, promoted the green conversion of brick kilns through the adoption of **zigzag technology**. The Inclusive Market and Livelihood Assessment study (ILO, 2025) conducted this year as part of the project highlighted and quantified the benefits of this change. The improvements concern not only the environment, thanks to the reduction in emissions produced during combustion, but also the economic aspect. Bricks made with this technology are in fact of superior quality and guarantee greater revenue.



8.2. Safeguarding and Promoting Cultural and Natural Heritage

8.2.1. Context

Pakistan holds a rich and diverse heritage, where nature and culture are intertwined in an ongoing dialogue. The landscapes, deeply shaped by history, preserve traces of millennia-old civilizations: from prehistory to Greek, Hindu, and Mughal influences, spanning the legacy of Islam and Buddhism. The indigenous communities that inhabit these places play a crucial role, preserving

traditions, knowledge, and cultural practices, thus contributing to the transmission of historical memory and the protection of local identity.

In the Pakistan Vision 2025 strategy paper (MoPD&SI, 2025)⁹⁸ the **heritage is recognized as a resource for development** and national integration, to be protected and enhanced also for the purposes of cultural diplomacy and tourism. In 2024, tourism contributed 6.1% of GDP and employed approximately 4.8 million people (PTDC, 2024)⁹⁹; Forecasts point to revenues of over \$4 billion by 2025

98. Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI) of the government of Pakistan. [Pakistan 2025 One Nation One Vision](#) redatto dal Planning Commission. 2025

99. Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC). [Pakistan Tourism Barometer](#). 2024

(PEN, 2025)¹⁰⁰, with an annual growth of 6.75% between 2025 and 2029 (The Nation, 2025)¹⁰¹. Despite the great tourism potential, infrastructure and services are insufficient, access to and use of the sites are difficult, promotion is limited and the overall tourism offer uncompetitive.

Opening up to tourism and protecting and enhancing cultural heritage would require solid support from educational institutions; however, such initiatives are confronted with a population whose literacy stands at around 60.6% in a country where public expenditure on education (0.8% of GDP) has fallen by 29.4% (MoF, 2025)¹⁰².

Natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, also put cultural and environmental heritage at risk and increase the socio-economic vulnerability of communities. The 2022 floods caused approximately \$18 million in environmental damage. At least 149 sites, including two UNESCO sites, suffered significant structural damage valued at more than \$6 million (UNDP, 2022)¹⁰³. Furthermore, Pakistan is among the most active seismic zones in the world: in the last 10 years there have been 2,404 earthquakes with a magnitude greater than or equal to 4 (EarthquakeList, 2025)¹⁰⁴; The most devastating earthquake of 2015 in KP, with a magnitude of 7.5, destroyed infrastructure, public buildings and numerous archaeological sites (Dawn, 2015)¹⁰⁵.

Since 2020, the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach has been strengthened by national strategies and operational programmes for

cultural heritage, such as the FAR, First Aid and Resilience for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis (ICCROM, 2025)¹⁰⁶, and protected areas, with the NAP - National Adaptation Plan (MoCC&EC, 2023)¹⁰⁷. The regulatory protection framework, however, remains generic and not integrated, with the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act (PEPA) of 1997 and the Antiquities Act of 1975.

In addition to material damage impacting the tourism sector, natural disasters undermine intangible cultural heritage. Forced displacement and migration disrupt traditional links between communities, culture and the environment, threatening the social fabric of affected communities and their land-related sources of livelihood.

8.2.2. Needs Analysis

For heritage, both cultural and natural, to contribute to the socioeconomic well-being of communities through sustainable development, it is necessary to implement management actions that ensure its protection, conservation, valorization, and promotion by actively involving both local authorities, through efficient interinstitutional **governance systems**, and communities, through the creation of participatory committees, organizations, and platforms.

Preventive DRR interventions, using traditional local techniques¹⁰⁸, **are essential to safeguard heritage from natural disasters** to mitigate the effects and increase resilience.

In order to combat the depopulation of territories and promote sustainable

100. Pakistan Economic Network (PEN). [Pakistan's Tourism Sector Set to Generate Over \\$4 Billion by 2025](#). 2025

101. The Nation. [Pakistan's tourism industry set to generate \\$4b revenue](#). 2025

102. Ministry of Finance. [Chapter on Education](#). 2025

103. UNDP. [Pakistan Floods 2022: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment \(PDNA\)](#). 2022

104. Earthquake List. [Pakistan Earthquake Report](#). 2025

105. Dawn. [World Heritage sites developed cracks in Oct 26 quake](#). 2015

106. ICCROM. [First Aid and Resilience for Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis \(FAR\)](#). 2025

107. Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination. [National Adaptation Plan](#). Pakistan 2023

108. For example: restoration with local and sustainable materials, resilient vernacular construction, collective management of land and water resources, protection of historic sites from floods and landslides.

economic growth, **it is a priority to generate employment opportunities for local communities**, both as a laborer for excavations, and with certified specialized training courses dedicated to conservation and restoration. At the same time, models of landscape and cultural economics, such as ecotourism, should be developed with support for female entrepreneurship in the tourism supply chain.

Within this framework, education, especially for women, is becoming central, and therefore its accessibility and quality must be improved by updating school curricula, strengthening teachers' pedagogical preparation, and making teaching spaces more functional. Education geared towards **global citizenship, sustainable development and valorization of heritage** should also be promoted to ensure the intergenerational transmission of a sense of belonging, the value of culture and respect for diversity.

8.2.3. Approach

In Agenda 2030, cultural and natural heritage plays a key role in the Pillar Prosperity, representing a lever for the growth of the socioeconomic well-being of local communities. To achieve the ToC's Expected Outcome **"Increased Safeguarding of Cultural and Natural Heritage"**, AICS Islamabad adopts people-centered and living heritage approaches. With the people-centered approach, **heritage is considered a resource capable of generating socio-economic benefits and creating people-**



centred development, including through forms of sustainable cultural tourism (ICCRUM, 2015)¹⁰⁹. Complementarily, the living heritage approach considers and protects tangible and intangible heritage as an inseparable whole, valorizing its evolution and role in contemporary society (Poulios, 2014)¹¹⁰. Together, these approaches guide interventions to safeguard, conserve, and enhance heritage, promoting more effective management of natural and cultural sites and their revitalization, which is essential for improving the provision of sustainable tourism and supporting local economic development.

The recent **"Culture & Person Methodological Manual"** (AICS, 2025)¹¹¹, It also allows for an increase in the spectrum of specific objectives and related indicators within UNESCO's thematic areas (UNESCO, 2019)¹¹², fostering **integrated and strategic management of cultural and natural heritage** in future initiatives.

109. International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCRUM). [Guidance Note. People-Centred Approaches to the Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Living Heritage](#). 2015

110. I. Poulios. *The Past in the Present. A Living Heritage Approach, Meteora Greece*. 2014

111. AICS-Ufficio III Opportunità e Sviluppo Economico. [Manuale metodologico cultura & persona crescita inclusiva - sostenibilità sociale](#). 2025 e AICS-Ufficio III Team Cultura & Sviluppo. [Cultura è Sviluppo: Elementi per la Progettazione](#). 2025

112. UNESCO. [The Culture - 2030 Indicators](#). 2019

Focus - Radio Van

Radio Van is a radio programme dedicated to the knowledge and promotion of local cultural heritage, within the project "RADIO Education - Promotion of learning through radio in isolated areas of Pakistan" funded by the Italian Cooperation through AICS and implemented by UNESCO.

Aimed at young people and adults, it has been broadcast weekly, at the provincial level, since September 2025 and is also available as a podcast on the Facebook pages of local radio stations.

Each episode features a trip to a historic site aboard a virtual VAN, with a school group of one teacher, three students, and two students, accompanied by a local guide. Along the way, the guide describes the geography of the landscape, the roads, and the monuments, intertwining the narrative with events and legends that recount the deeds, customs, and traditions of different civilizations. The towns, villages and markets they pass through also present themselves, focusing on the colours, smells, artisanal activities and local traditions. Upon reaching their destination, the visit goes into detail, illustrating the site's history, its architecture, the construction techniques used, its function over time, and the objects preserved, through which the life of the communities that inhabited it is reconstructed.

Each trip represents an exciting educational adventure, and at the end of each episode, girls and boys share reflections, curiosities, and what they will tell their families.

The program includes 12 trips dedicated to the identity sites of the project's intervention areas, providing information on opening hours and days.

The episodes conclude with a message that reinforces a sense of belonging, cultural awareness, and the responsibility to pass on heritage to future generations: "Preserving our cultural identity is not just the government's job, but all of us's. A nation that cherishes its past illuminates its future."

In KP:	In GB:	In Balochistan:
1. Stupa of Saidu Sharif	1. Fort of Chilas	1. Watchtowers and stone houses of the Kandia Valley
2. Museum of Swat	2. Rock engravings of Thalpan and Diامر	2. Karez system (ancient hydraulic engineering system)
3. Rock engravings of Shatial Das in Lower Kohistan	3. Fort of Gopis	3. Mughal Fort Loralai
4. Petroglyphs di Sahni Khel	4. Historic site of Yasin in Gopis-Yasin	
5. Caves di Mohmand		



The episodes conclude with a message that reinforces a sense of belonging, cultural awareness, and the responsibility to pass on heritage to future generations: *"Preserving our cultural identity is not just the government's job, but all of us's. A nation that cherishes its past illuminates its future."*



Episode on the AICS
Islamabad office on the
Karez System (in Urdu)



Radio Pakistan interviews
Dr. Zatta, Head of Office (in
English)



Humanitarian Assistance

09

Humanitarian Assistance

9.1. Humanitarian Situation in Pakistan

During 2025, Pakistan experienced a period of marked humanitarian vulnerability, driven by the combination of climate shocks, economic pressures, and critical security issues. Heavy monsoon rains and large-scale flooding have affected millions of people, exacerbating already high levels of food insecurity and further straining a public service system weakened by infrastructure shortages. The picture was made more complex by an operational environment characterized by persistent security risks and an increase in forced internal and cross-border movement. In this scenario, the main humanitarian priorities relate to: rapid response to water and sanitation emergencies, protection of the most vulnerable populations, food and nutrition assistance, restoration of essential services and support for safe and decent mobility routes for displaced persons (UNICEF, 2025)¹¹³.

In line with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace approach, life-saving interventions in Pakistan are closely interlinked with structural deficiencies in development, governance and climate resilience. The Support Plan for Relief and Early Recovery (UNOCHA, 2025)¹¹⁴ and the *UNSDCF 2023–2027* (UN, 2022)¹¹⁵ point out how exclusively emergency responses are insufficient in the absence of integrated early recovery, livelihood strengthening, disaster risk reduction and social cohesion

promotion interventions. In this context, flexible instruments such as the Regional Humanitarian Fund for Asia-Pacific (APHF) are a key element in linking immediate assistance to medium- to long-term resilience and stability pathways. A joint and coordinated approach among humanitarian, development and peace actors is therefore essential to reduce chronic vulnerabilities, prevent recurrent crises and sustain lasting stability and resilience trajectories.

9.2. Impact of Floods

The monsoon floods of summer 2025 have further exacerbated the humanitarian situation. The Relief and Early Recovery Support Plan: 2025 Monsoon Floods (UNOCHA, 2025)¹¹⁶, coordinated by the Government of Pakistan with United Nations support, highlights significant loss of life, large-scale displacement and extensive damage to housing infrastructure, livelihoods and essential services, particularly in the areas of WASH, health, food security and education. The rains affected over 6.9 million people, caused more than 1,000 deaths and displaced approximately 3 million individuals. The floods also destroyed approximately 900,000 hectares of agricultural land, caused the loss of tens of thousands of livestock, and caused damage to the agricultural sector estimated at \$1.23 billion, exacerbating food insecurity and rising commodity prices.

113. UNICEF. *Pakistan 2025 HAC Prioritization*. 2025

114. UNOCHA. *Pakistan 2025 Monsoon Floods: Support Plan for Relief and Early Recovery (October 2025 - April 2026)*. 2025

115. United Nations. *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–2027 for Pakistan*. 2022

116. UNOCHA. *Pakistan 2025 Monsoon Floods: Support Plan for Relief and Early Recovery (October 2025 - April 2026)*. 2025



As part of the emergency response, the Pakistan Envelope of the Regional Humanitarian Fund for Asia-Pacific (APHF) has already allocated USD 1.63 million, reaching over 250,000 people affected by the floods in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan provinces (UNOCHA, 2025)¹¹⁷. Nonetheless, the funding gap to the annual target of \$10 million limits response capacity, particularly in the most remote and difficult-to-access areas.

The destruction of water and health infrastructure has increased the risk of waterborne diseases, such as acute diarrhea

and cholera, and vector diseases, particularly dengue, in urban and peri-urban settings (UNOCHA, 2025)¹¹⁸. As a result, interventions in the WASH and health sectors remain priority and lifesaving, especially for children under five, pregnant and breastfeeding women, the elderly, and people with disabilities. All APHF-supported interventions systematically integrate gender considerations, GBV/PSEA risk mitigation measures, accountability mechanisms to affected populations (AAPs), and a cross-cutting focus on age and disability to ensure equitable and inclusive access to services.

117. UNOCHA. [Pakistan APHF Funding Snapshot \(Allocations as of 30 November 2025\)](#). 2025

118. UNOCHA. [Pakistan: Flash Floods - Jun 2025](#). 2025

9.3. Food Insecurity and Nutrition

Food insecurity and malnutrition continue to be priority humanitarian needs. According to FAO, WFP and IPC analysis, between November 2024 and March 2025 approximately 11 million people are in acute food insecurity, including 1.7 million in Phase 4, Emergency (IPC, 2025)¹¹⁹. The most affected areas include Balochistan and Sindh, where acute malnutrition rates exceed emergency thresholds, with extreme levels in some districts. The most vulnerable groups include children under five, pregnant and lactating women, female-headed households and rural communities dependent on subsistence farming (UNICEF, 2025)¹²⁰. In this context, the APHF supports integrated interventions in food assistance, nutrition, and agricultural livelihood support, in line with the Emergency Relief and Rapid Recovery Plan, with the objective of saving lives, preventing a further deterioration of famine conditions, and promoting local economic recovery. The Global Report on Food Crises 2025 (GNAFC, FSIN, 2024)¹²¹ stresses the urgent need for interventions aimed at protecting livelihoods, mitigating food deficits and saving lives, as such populations urgently need adequate support to address severe conditions of food insecurity and malnutrition

In 2025, the international community intensified its efforts to address food insecurity and malnutrition in Pakistan through a combination of immediate assistance, nutritional support, and long-term resilience interventions.

Overall, the international response in 2025 aimed not only to address the immediate emergency but also to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable communities to adapt to future shocks, in a context marked by recurring climate crises, economic instability, and systemic fragility.

9.4. Essential Health Needs

The health system faces acute criticalities related to rising drug prices, limited access to essential services and disruption of primary health services, particularly in areas affected by natural disasters (UNICEF, 2025)¹²². Primary health services have suffered widespread disruptions due to structural damage, access difficulties, and supply shortages. Response agencies have pre-positioned medical kits to address the increase in cases of acute watery diarrhea, dengue, respiratory infections, and other diseases related to climate impacts. The recovery of the health sector requires priority interventions such as: the restoration of maternity facilities and services, supplementary vaccination campaigns, the strengthening of epidemiological surveillance systems and the provision of essential medicines and basic equipment (UNICEF, 2025)¹²³.

9.5. Internal Displacement and Migration

Floods and safe conditions have led to large-scale internal movements: at various times of the year, hundreds of thousands of people, up to over a million at the most critical stages, have been forced to temporarily leave their

119. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). *Pakistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for November 2024 - March 2025 and Projection for April - July 2025*. 2025

120. UNICEF. *Humanitarian Action for Children: South Asia Region*. 2025

121. Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC), Food Security Information Network (FSIN). *2025 Global Report on Food Crises: Joint Analysis for Better Decisions*. 2024

122. UNICEF. *Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1: Pakistan*. 2025

123. UNICEF. *Pakistan Humanitarian*. 2025

homes. Displaced persons registered urgent needs for shelter, protection, health care and access to basic services. Mobility monitoring tools ([Pakistan I Displacement Tracking Matrix](#) - developed by IOM) continue to play an essential role in guiding humanitarian programming (UNICEF, 2025)¹²⁴.

At the same time, Pakistan is home to over three million Afghan citizens, putting strong pressure on local public services. Since 2023, and more markedly in 2025, returns to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran have intensified: between January and December 2025, more than 2 million people returned, mostly without documents (UNHCR, 2025)¹²⁵. These movements disproportionately affect minors and female-headed households,

increase protection risks and contribute to dynamics of regional instability, highlighting the nexus between humanitarian needs, migration management and peace.

9.6. Financial Coverage and Response Capacity

The humanitarian priorities outlined by UN agencies for 2026 require significant resources to ensure interventions in the areas of health, WASH, child protection, nutrition, and food security. Financial requirements not covered continue to limit the ability of partner agencies and organizations to implement interventions on a scale appropriate to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups (UNICEF, 2025)¹²⁶.



124. UNICEF. [Disaster- Pakistan](#). 2025

125. UNHCR. [Afghanistan situation](#). 2025

126. UNICEF. [Pakistan 2025 HAC Prioritization](#). 2025

Focus - Humanitarian Response: Short to Medium-Term Priorities



1. **Multi-sectoral flood response:** emergency food distribution, WASH kits and rapid repair of water networks; rehabilitation of mobile health points (UNOCHA, 2025)¹²⁷.
2. **Targeted food assistance:** food assistance interventions (including cash transfers where markets are functioning) in areas classified as IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) Phases 3–4; support to agricultural livelihoods for the subsequent planting season (IPC, 2025)¹²⁸.
3. **Public health and epidemics:** strengthening surveillance on acute watery diarrhoea (AWD)/dengue, targeted vaccination campaigns, nutrition programmes for pregnant/infant children and women (UNICEF, 2025)¹²⁹
4. **Protection and response to displacement:** protection services for vulnerable groups (women, children), decent temporary accommodation solutions, IDP tracing and liaison with legal aid and documentation services (IOM, 2025)¹³⁰
5. **Safe access and humanitarian negotiation:** coordination with national/provincial authorities to ensure safe humanitarian corridors and rapid authorizations for aid delivery, particularly in areas at risk of insecurity.

127. UNOCHA. *Pakistan: Flash Floods - Jun 2025*. 2025

128. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). *Pakistan Acute Food Insecurity Analysis*. 2025

129. UNICEF. *Pakistan Humanitarian*. 2025

130. International Organization for Migration (IOM). *Displacement Tracking Matrix: Pakistan*. 2025 & International Organization for Migration (IOM). *DTM Flow monitoring of Afghan nationals – Annual Report (2025)*. 2026

A woman wearing a purple hijab and a light purple long-sleeved shirt is shown in a laboratory or classroom setting. She is holding a large blue plastic water bottle with a blue handle and pouring water into a clear graduated cylinder on a table. The background shows a tiled ceiling with a light fixture and other people in the distance. The overall scene suggests a focus on science, education, and access to clean water.

**Gender Equality and Women's
Empowerment (GEWE)**

10

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE)

10.1. Context

"Gender equality is both a principle and a strategy and fosters diversity, innovation and growth. Valuing all human capital enables economies to face transformations and accelerate productivity and prosperity." (WEF, 2025)¹³¹ For this reason, it is an essential element for socio-economic development.

The legislative framework in Pakistan shows attention to women's rights, starting with the 1973 Constitution, which prohibits discrimination based on sex (Art. 25) and ensures the full participation of women in all sectors of national life (Art. 34).

Moreover, the government's strategy document "Pakistan Vision 2025" (MoPD&SI, 2014)¹³² promotes women's self-esteem, the right to determine their own choices, access to opportunities and resources, the right and power to control their lives, both inside and outside the home, and the ability to influence social change.

On November 28, 2025, the Senate passed the National Policy to End Violence against Women and Girls (DAWN, 2025)¹³³, promoted by the Ministry of Human Rights.

Nonetheless, UNFPA says these remain goals still beyond the reach of women in Pakistan (UNFPA, 2025)¹³⁴ and indeed the data relating to the gender gap, and in particular those on violence against women, continue to be worrying.

In four years, **173,367 cases of domestic violence** were reported to the police in Pakistan from 2021 to 2024, **including 7,500 femicides, 1,553 so-called "honor killings" and 127 acid attacks** (DAWN, 2025)¹³⁵. The latest National Report on the State of Women in Pakistan (NCSW, 2023)¹³⁶ highlights that **obtaining justice is often an unattainable right**, as services are inaccessible or inadequate and victims face further trauma caused by a costly, inefficient, slow and fragile justice system in implementing the principles of equity and equality.

Pakistan has the 6^o highest number of **child brides** in the world, reaching nearly **19 million** (UNICEF, 2022)¹³⁷. Child marriage remains a widespread practice at the national level and particularly in rural areas, aggravated by poverty and climate change, so much so that at the federal level the Child Marriage Restraint Act (Child Marriage Restraint Act) of

131. Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director, World Economic Forum in World Economic Forum. [Global Gender Gap Report 2025](#). 2025

132. Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI), Government of Pakistan (GoP), [Pakistan Vision 2025](#), 2014

133. I. A. Khan. [Senate okays domestic violence bill amid opposition outcry](#). DAWN. November 28, 2025

134. UNFPA Pakistan. [Women's empowerment](#). Last accessed January 26, 2026

135. National Police Bureau data reported by the Minister for Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar to the National Assembly on 7 November 2025. A. Wasim. [Over 7,500 women murdered in four years, minister tells National Assembly](#). DAWN. 8 November 2025

136. NCSW National Commission on the Status of Women. UN Women. [National Report on the Status of Women in Pakistan](#). 2023 p.17

137. Of these, 4.6 million are under the age of 15. [UNICEF, Child Marriage Country Profile – Pakistan](#). March 9, 2022

1929 established the minimum age for girls at 16 and for boys at 18, and is still in force in the provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. The last passed **Law on the Prohibition of Child Marriage was passed in May 2025 and raised the minimum age for both men and women in the Islamabad Capital Territory to 18.**

10.2. Needs Analysis

Resistance caused by cultural norms and the acceptance of gender stereotypes remains the main barrier to achieving gender equality.

This aspect was repeatedly highlighted in the monitoring carried out by this Office in 2025¹³⁸ on the ongoing projects.

One of the consequences of the internalization of such behaviors is the normalization of male and family control over women's choices, often with protective intentions, which leads to repercussions on restrictions on the mobility of women and girls, access to mobile phones and the internet, management of family planning, and school access.

When the situation is aggravated by conditions of economic vulnerability, the



Photo credits: FAO Pakistan

138. See dedicated Focus

use of forced and early marriages is a well-established phenomenon. Climate change is helping to exacerbate it, so much so that the term “monsoon brides” was coined precisely because this harmful practice has increased, estimated by UNICEF at around 18%, following the floods (Al Jazeera, 2025)¹³⁹.

10.3. Approach

AICS is committed to creating the conditions for **women and girls to be subjects of resilience and agents of sustainable development processes**, even in contexts of extreme vulnerability. Islamabad Office, in line with the AICS/MAECI Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, Girls and Girls (2020-2024), integrates gender perspectives into funded initiatives according to a twin-track approach, a contextual and adaptive approach and adopts the principle of “do no harm”.

The two-track approach involves, on the one hand, supporting actions whose main objective is the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, with Gender Policy Marker 2 (OCSE-DAC)¹⁴⁰; on the other hand, it ensures the presence of cross-cutting actions in the programme documents and individual initiatives, which are assigned a Gender Policy Marker 1.

Of the total value of the initiatives present in the Pakistan portfolio in 2025, equal to approximately 169.5 million euros, 2% (€ 3.5 M) includes two initiatives with gender marker 2 or principal; **71% (€ 120 M) include 13 initiatives with gender marker 1 or significant** and the remaining 27% (€ 45.9 M) is made up of two initiatives with gender marker 0 or Not targeted.

The contextual and adaptive approach takes into account cultural, social, economic and environmental factors. This approach avoids the application of rigid models,



preferring flexible solutions. In addition, it has a participatory orientation, involving local actors and stakeholders in defining solutions and thus promoting ownership of practices. Furthermore, it adopts a systemic perspective that integrates different disciplines and considers intersectionality.

More than **20 women-led informal organizations or groups** are currently involved in ongoing initiatives in Pakistan, according to a recent monitoring survey on gender equality.

Do no harm is the fundamental principle in international and humanitarian cooperation interventions, and requires that every action is beneficial and does not cause direct or indirect harm to the beneficiary people and communities. For this reason, AICS Islamabad promotes the inclusion and continuous updating of **gender analyses** in project cycles, so that the various implications are considered without making gender differences transparent, and so that the risk of unintentional harm is reduced.

139. Al Jazeera. *My childhood just slipped away: Pakistan's 'monsoon brides'*. 2025

140. The OECD-DAC Gender Policy Marker has 4 levels: Main (2); Significant (1); Not Targetted (0). When the project has not been examined, it should not be excluded that there are components related to the marker.

Focus - Monitoring on Gender Equality

The AICS Islamabad Office deepened its **analysis of gender equality activities through its a monitoring exercise**, conducted from August to October, on the gender transformative capacity of the ongoing interventions. There are 21 projects and initiatives (10 in Afghanistan and **11 in Pakistan**), of a total value of almost EUR 48 million, on which 23 implementing partners were requested (14¹⁴¹ in Afghanistan and **9¹⁴² in Pakistan**) to analyse, through a questionnaire, guided by a questionnaire, of how the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment are achieved.

Challenges include **resistance caused by cultural norms and gender stereotypes** typical of patriarchal societies, with restrictive consequences on several fronts: on the mobility of women to participate in training sessions and fairs, and of girls to attend school; on internet access and the use of social media to promote and sell products; on early marriages that cause dropping out of school; and on male control over women's choices, from the radio show to listen to, to the possibility of going out or taking on voluntary leadership roles in the community.

Other consequences include low female participation in radio programmes so as not to publicly expose her voice, **difficulty in obtaining representation in decision-making and steering bodies**, and gender segregation in the workplace, particularly male dominance in the construction and green sectors. Added to this are the scarcity of female trainers in the technical field, **limited access to funding for women entrepreneurs**, the lack of an ecosystem that fosters female participation in the labor market, and male concerns that increasing awareness of women's rights could lead to excessive freedom, and **discrimination against women and girls who are victims of violence**.

Among activities designed to overcome gender barriers, video recordings and online technical training sessions have been introduced to respond to the conditions of limited mobility of women and girls in some areas¹⁴³.

The **success stories** were told through interviews that gave voice to the protagonists, shared on the Islamabad Office social media channels during the Global Campaign of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence.

The examined projects promoted **models and good practices** for women's inclusion and empowerment. These include the **village agricultural cooperative model**, some

141. UNFPA, WeWorld – GVC, NOVE ETS, Vento di Terra Onlus, CESVI Fondazione ETS, People in Need, INTERSOS, EMERGENCY, IOM, STFA – *Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan* (UNODC, ILO, UNDP, WHO, UNFPA), World Bank

142. UNESCO, UNDP, CIHEAM-Bari, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, ILO, FAO, ISCOS, EAD, UNHCR

143. In the initiative "Scaling up OliveCulture Value Chain and Promoting Climate Resilient Rural Development in Pakistan" supported by the Italian Cooperation and executed by CIHEAM Bari, the online and registered training courses covered the production of cosmetics and soaps, and business development.

of which are headed by women,¹⁴⁴ to strengthen the value chain; **technical training and related market linkages and women's leadership**, for example in the production of moisturizers, soaps and preserves, to allow women to start profitable businesses working from home¹⁴⁵; and the **involvement of communities and male family members** to reduce cultural barriers. Regarding the education sector, the use of **radio** to deliver learning services has enabled outreach to girls living in remote areas, as well as to children who are frequently excluded from formal schooling due to work commitments. At the same time, teacher training on inclusive pedagogy and the impacts of climate change has helped make classroom practices more participatory, relevant, and up to date.¹⁴⁶ In addition, the **establishment of safe spaces for women and girls**, together with the introduction of **community feedback** mechanisms, has contributed to stronger protection and accountability. The assessment also found that **55% of the initiatives** (6 out of 11) included a designated **gender focal point** within the project team, while **82% of the interventions reviewed (9 out of 11) ensured that project staff received training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**.

Among the **unintended gender-related consequences**, an **increase in the workload of women** participating in the initiatives was observed, without a corresponding reduction in domestic responsibilities. This imbalance has resulted in heightened stress levels for women.

Looking ahead, the recommendations emphasise the need to further **support women-led initiatives** and organizations and to systematically promote women's empowerment across all projects. At the same time, they underscore the importance of **increasing men's engagement**—particularly through transformative behavior change programs and awareness-raising sessions on harassment and gender equality—to reduce resistance and encourage shared responsibility.

Furthermore, the **promotion of intergenerational learning** is encouraged by leveraging women's roles in transmitting knowledge to daughters-in-law and children. This approach supports family-based strategies and **sustainable women's economic empowerment** through income-generation and entrepreneurship initiatives.

Finally, the report highlights the **importance of consolidating achieved results through continuous engagement**, adapting interventions to diverse contexts by defining **context-specific targets**, and ensuring the **systematic collection of disaggregated data**.

144. Within the soft loan initiative "Italian co-financing to the Economic Transformation Initiative (ETI)" in Gilgit Baltistan (GB) - Pakistan worth USD 133.72 million, co-financed by IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) (50%), Italy (17%), the Government of the GB (17%) and the community (16%). Agricultural Cooperatives support 40,000 farmers, of whom 30% are women.

145. The good practice of promoting income-generating activities carried out by women in their own homes is consistent with a cultural context that, in the absence of such opportunities, would confine them to a condition of isolation. While not the preferred modality in terms of empowerment and participation, working from home constitutes an adaptive solution that allows us to overcome social barriers and promote economic inclusion.

146. With reference to the initiatives "Support to the Female Education Sector and Cultural Heritage Preservation through Education in Pakistan" and "RADIO Education - Promotion of Learning through Radio in Isolated Areas of Pakistan".

Focus - 16 Days of Activism, 365 Days of Commitment

The campaign carried out within the 16 days of activism against gender violence, from November 25 to December 10, 2025, developed a progressive and coherent narrative through **17 posts** published on **AICS Islamabad** social media channels. Each content contributed to strengthening the central message of the campaign, linking the fight against gender-based violence to the humanitarian and development action taking place in the countries of competence of the Islamabad Office and the promotion of rights.

The projects and stories presented are based on insights gathered through the monitoring of gender mainstreaming activities and contributions from implementing organisations. The campaign had about **10,500¹⁴⁷** views, doubling the previous year's results.



Post 1 – Commencement of the campaign

AICS logo has been temporarily coloured in orange, the bright and optimistic campaign color, which represents hope for a better future, free from violence against women and girls.



Post 2 – Institutional launch (AICS)

The opening post, illustrated by a group photograph of Islamabad Office staff (center: Head of Office, Francesco Zatta, with Deputy Technical Director, Giuseppe Cerasoli, on a mission from AICS Rome), reaffirmed Italy's institutional commitment to combating gender-based violence.



Post 4 – Women, cultural heritage and social change

(Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan – Khyber PATH)

Dr. Hayat's video testimony valued the role of women as professionals and agents of change, linking women's empowerment, heritage protection and sustainable development¹⁴⁸. The content has garnered approximately 4,530 views, making it the most engaging post of the entire campaign.



147. Updated as of January 20, 2026

148. As part of the grant initiative supported by Italian Cooperation: "Khyber PATH – Professions for climate Adaptation, eco-Tourism and Heritage" implemented by Ca' Foscari University of Venice.



Post 6 – Education and prevention of violence (UNESCO – Radio Education)



The video post highlighted the role of education, including through radio, as a tool for promoting gender equality and preventing violence, including its digital forms¹⁴⁹. The content was also disseminated by the AICS headquarters website in Rome.



Post 7 – Women, science and rural development (CIHEAM-Bari, OliveCulture-II Scale-up)



Dr. Humara Umar’s video testimony emphasized how scientific knowledge and research represent levers of emancipation and social transformation. The content confirmed the public’s interest in the role of women in science and rural development¹⁵⁰.



Post 10 – Women’s leadership and economic development (Economic Transformation Initiative-GB)



Dr. Noor’s audio story showed the value of women’s leadership in promoting local development, empowering women, and reducing poverty, particularly through women-led agricultural cooperatives in Pakistan¹⁵¹.

149. Within the grant initiative “Radio Education - Promotion of learning through radio in isolated areas of Pakistan” supported by Italian Cooperation and implemented by UNESCO.

150. “Scaling up OliveCulture value chain and promoting climate resilient rural development in Pakistan”

151. Italian co-financing to the Economic Transformation Initiative (ETI)* in GB



Post 13 – Girls' education and community leadership (UNESCO – Girls' Education)

Ms. Shah Naz Bibi's video testimony in Pashto, with English subtitles, highlighted the transformative role of activated mothers' groups in promoting girls' education in Pakistan¹⁵².



Post 16 – Women and environmental sciences (UNDP – Water for Development)

Through the testimony of an Environmental Science student in Pakistan, the video highlighted the importance of reducing gender segregation in scientific disciplines to promote more inclusive and equitable societies. In particular, the issue addressed relates to access to safe and reliable water and the role of women's leadership in its management. This dimension has undergone significant change in recent years, as cultural barriers that traditionally limited women's participation in the sector have increasingly been challenged and overcome¹⁵³.



Added value of storytelling

The storytelling approach adopted this year, centered on real stories and intersectional perspectives (gender, disability, migration, poverty), fostered greater empathy and audience participation. The shares helped position the campaign not only as an awareness-raising action, but as an advocacy tool for women's rights and the prevention of gender-based violence through daily engagement, integrated policies, and full recognition of women's transformative role in sustainable development.

152. "Support to the female education sector and cultural heritage preservation through education in Pakistan" supported by Italian Cooperation and implemented by UNESCO.

153. From what emerges in UNDP's area of implementation of the project

Testimonials



Venice,
14th October, 2025

Ms. Anila Hayat – Khyber Path Project

"I am Anila Hayat, and I come from the mountains of Hunza. I studied Environmental Sciences and Urban Planning and have worked as an environmental consultant. I am currently working with the Italian Archaeological Mission (in Pakistan) on the project "Khyber PATH." PATH stands for Professions for Climate Adaptation, Ecotourism, and Heritage. I also work with the Venice Biennale as Exhibition Manager at the Pakistan Pavilion and, most importantly, I am also a full-time mother.

We (in Pakistan) have a very rich history and heritage, and I am truly happy that the Italian Cooperation is working on projects like this to preserve and conserve our history and heritage for future generations.

It is very important to integrate heritage conservation and tourism with the environmental component, because we cannot simply protect our heritage and neglect our environment. And the most important element is the people who work in it."



Islamabad,
16th October, 2025

Ms. Humera Umar – Olive Culture Project

"My name is Humera Umar. I hold a Master's degree in Agricultural Sciences and work as a Senior Researcher at the Centre of Excellence for Olive Research and Training (CEFORT), BARI in Chakwal, where I am also responsible for an olive oil quality laboratory.

I became involved in the project through my Institute and, thanks to my performance, dedication, and passion for olive oil, I was selected among several candidates, both men and women.

The 'Olive Culture' project has enhanced my professional skills and my expertise in olive oil, and has also provided me with international exposure, making me feel more confident.

Recently, I conducted training on the sensory analysis of olive oil, and the participants showed great interest. It was the first training on organoleptic analysis in Pakistan.

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the 'Olive Culture' project, the Italian Cooperation, and CIHEAM Bari for their continuous support and guidance to our community.

Through these projects, they have strengthened the olive oil sector in Pakistan and brought positive change to our communities, especially in support of women's empowerment, and I hope this collaboration will continue to grow."

Portfolio 2025

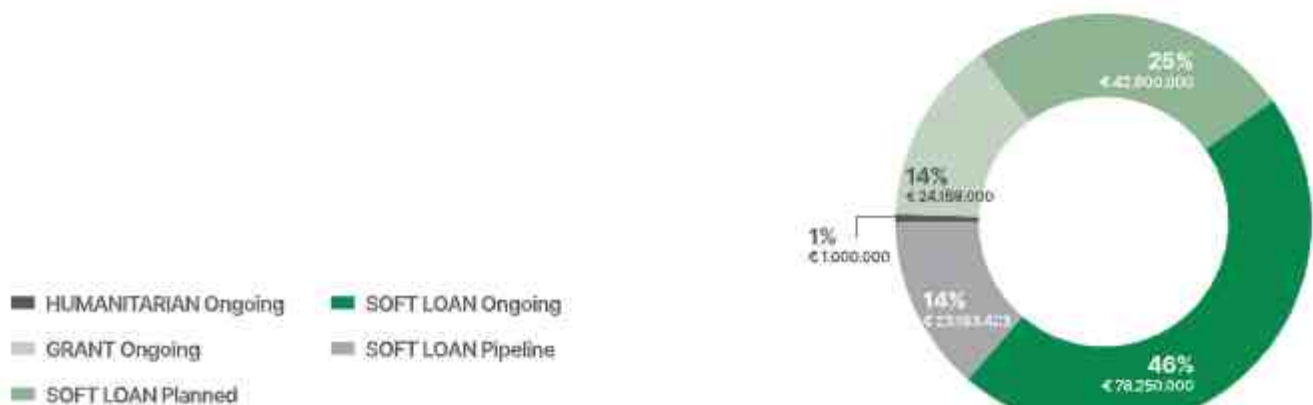
The entire 2025 portfolio includes 17 initiatives. Of these, 11 are funded by grant (off-budget), 5 by aid credit (on-budget), and 1 is a humanitarian intervention.

Pipeline projects are projects that have been deliberated by the Joint Committee but are not yet active, as bilateral agreements have not yet been signed.

The project that is defined as **planned** was approved in the programming but not deliberated.

Project Category	Total Budget	% of Total Budget	Number of Projects
Grants Ongoing	€ 23,163,423	13.67%	11
Soft Loan Ongoing	€ 78,250,000	46.17%	2
Total Humanitarian	€ 1,000,000	0.59%	1
Total Active	€ 102,413,423	60.43%	14
Soft Loan Pipeline	€ 24,159,000	14.26%	2
Soft Loan Planned	€ 42,900,000	25.31%	1
Total Non Active	€ 67,059,000	39.57%	3
Total Projects	€ 169,472,423	100.00%	17

Portfolio 2025

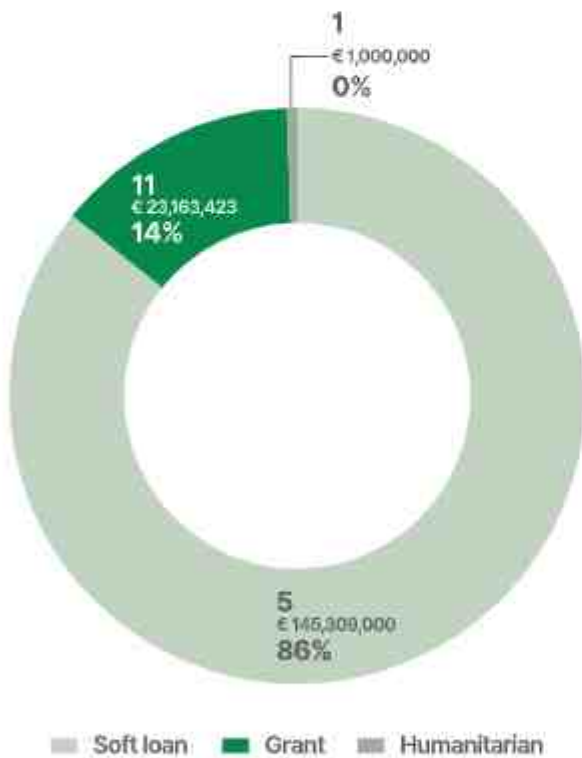


12.1. Grant Initiatives

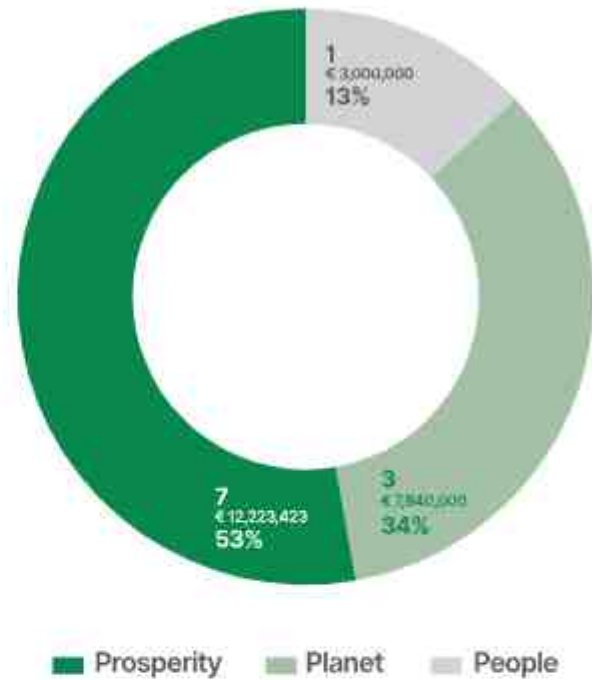
Grant-funded projects, totaling more than EUR 23 million, represent 14% of the overall budget. Soft loans exceed EUR 145 million and account for 86% of the total financing, supporting five initiatives that are either under implementation or planned.

Among the grant initiatives, 7 fall under the **Pillar Prosperity** with a budget of more than EUR 12 million (53%), 3 under the **Pillar Planet** with a budget of almost EUR 8 million (34%) and 1 under the **Pillar Person** with EUR 3 million (13%).

Funding Channel



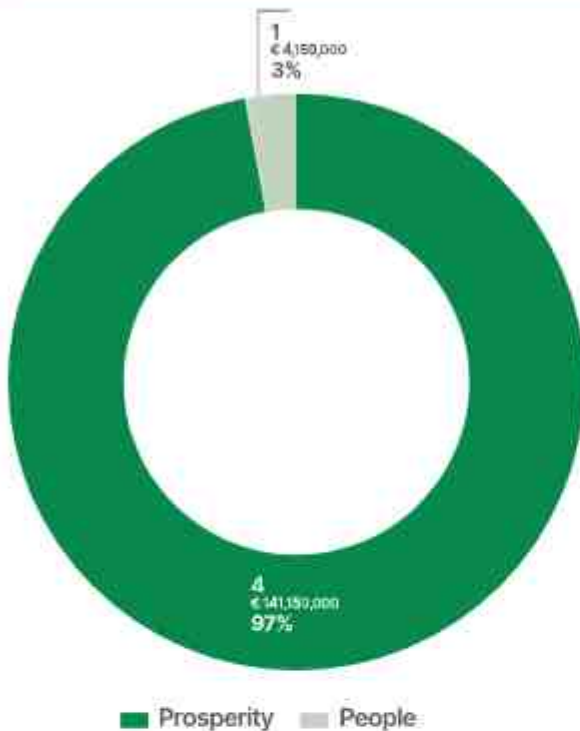
Grant-Funded Initiatives by Pillar



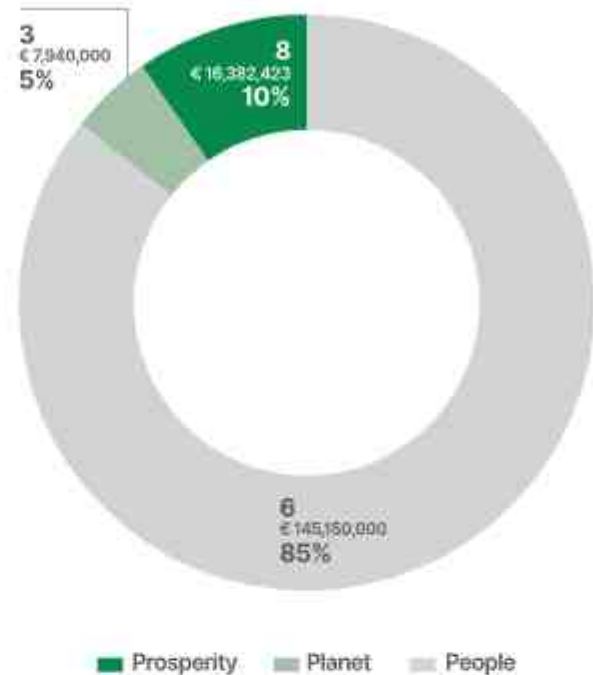
12.2. Soft Loan Initiatives

The **soft loan** portfolio currently includes two active initiatives, two in the pipeline and one planned, with a total value exceeding €145.3 million. Funding is almost completely concentrated in the **Person pillar**, which makes up 97% of the total credit budget with 4 initiatives. The remaining share of more than EUR 4.1 million or 3% falls under the **Prosperity pillar**, represented by a single initiative. There are currently no aid credit initiatives funded under the **Planet pillar**.

Soft Loan Initiatives by Pillar



Initiatives by Pillar



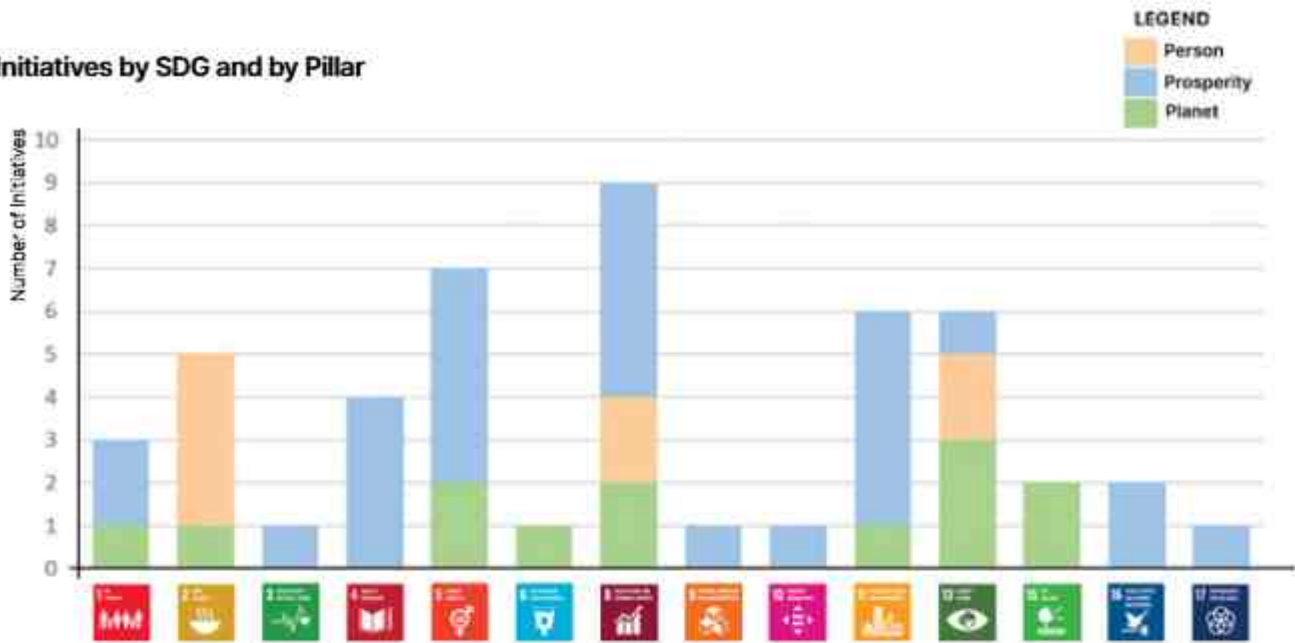
12.3. Initiatives by Pillar and by SDGs

Overall, the largest funding, amounting to over €145.1 million, representing **85% of the budget invested in Pakistan, is concentrated in the Person pillar**, with 6 initiatives. **10% of the funds are allocated to the Prosperity pillar**, totaling more than €16.3 million across eight initiatives. The remaining 5% is invested under the **Planet pillar, amounting to nearly €8 million** distributed among three initiatives.

Projects aspire to achieve different **SDGs** within three pillars of cooperation: **Person, Prosperity and Planet**. For each pillar, one or more predominant SDGs emerge, by number of projects.

- **Person pillar: SDG 2 - Zero Hunger** is present in four of the six projects included in the Pillar. Such projects also include internal SDG targets on food security, nutrition and resilience of rural communities.
- **Prosperity pillar: SDG 5 - Gender Equality, SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth together with SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities**, particularly with regard to the protection

Initiatives by SDG and by Pillar



of cultural heritage, are present in five of the eight projects that make up the Pillar.

- **Planet pillar: SDG 13 - Fight against Climate Change** is the central objective, present in all three projects that make up the Planet pillar.

Some SDGs are cross-cutting in nature, affecting the three pillars on which Italian Cooperation in Pakistan works. This is the case with **SDG 13 - Fighting Climate Change**, which reflects the cross-cutting nature of climate mitigation and adaptation efforts in a country highly exposed to environmental and socioeconomic risks. Similarly, **SDG 8 - Decent work and economic growth** – highlights the strategy adopted by Islamabad Office, oriented towards the promotion of employment, with particular attention to the protection of rights and the valorization of gender inclusion and different abilities.

Finally, the **Prosperity pillar** covers the wider range of SDGs (1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17), emphasizing an integrated approach to sustainable development.

AICS Islamabad’s portfolio also includes the **Pakistan-Italy Debt Conversion Agreement (PIDSA)**, signed in 2006 between the Government of Pakistan and Italy, which converted approximately €84 million of debt to reduce poverty through development projects in the health, education, agriculture, and infrastructure sectors. The programme funded 48 projects, of which 46 have been completed and 2 are in the process of administrative closure. The outstanding debt to be written off amounts to approximately 400,000 euros. The closure of PIDSA has been extended to June 2026.

Implementing Partners

The Italian Cooperation's engagement in Pakistan is anchored in robust and effective partnerships with key Pakistani institutional counterparts, civil society actors—local, Italian, and international—and a broad range of international organizations, including United Nations agencies, universities, and research institutions.

Main Pakistani Institutional Counterparts



Government of Pakistan
 Ministry of National Food Security & Research
 Ministry of Economic Affairs, Economic Affairs Division
 Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development
 Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training



Pakistan Oil Seed Department



NADRA
PAKISTAN



Directorate General of Archaeology and Museums of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (DGDAM)



Department of Education Government of Balochistan



Department of Education Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



Ministry of Education and Departments of Education Government of FATA

Civil society organizations:



Universities and research centres:



UN Agencies:



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



International Labour Organization



14

Way Forward

AICS Islamabad guides its commitment along three pillars and four strategic outcomes, focusing in particular on **food security, climate change resilience, decent work, and cultural heritage preservation**, in line with the Agenda 2030 and the 2024-2026 Triennial Strategy.

Within this framework, future interventions will develop within these themes:

Agri-food systems: support for the modernization of agriculture and livestock farming, through the strengthening of technical skills and the transfer of innovations, so as to raise productivity and improve living conditions in rural areas. In agreement with the Global Gateway, an initiative has been proposed as part of the 2026 programming exercise that aims to promote the involvement of the local and Italian profit sectors to achieve sustainable investments in rural development.

Climate resilience and environmental management: promotion of climate change adaptation practices and better management of natural resources, to strengthen the livelihoods of the most vulnerable communities and to reduce exposure to risks, including those related to air quality.

Cultural heritage and decent work: capitalisation of experiences already gained in the cultural sector, promoting replicable models that combine heritage protection and the creation of safe and environmentally friendly employment opportunities.

Vocational education and training: improving the quality of the education system and promoting innovative approaches to learning. Development of certified and labour market-oriented training schemes to increase the



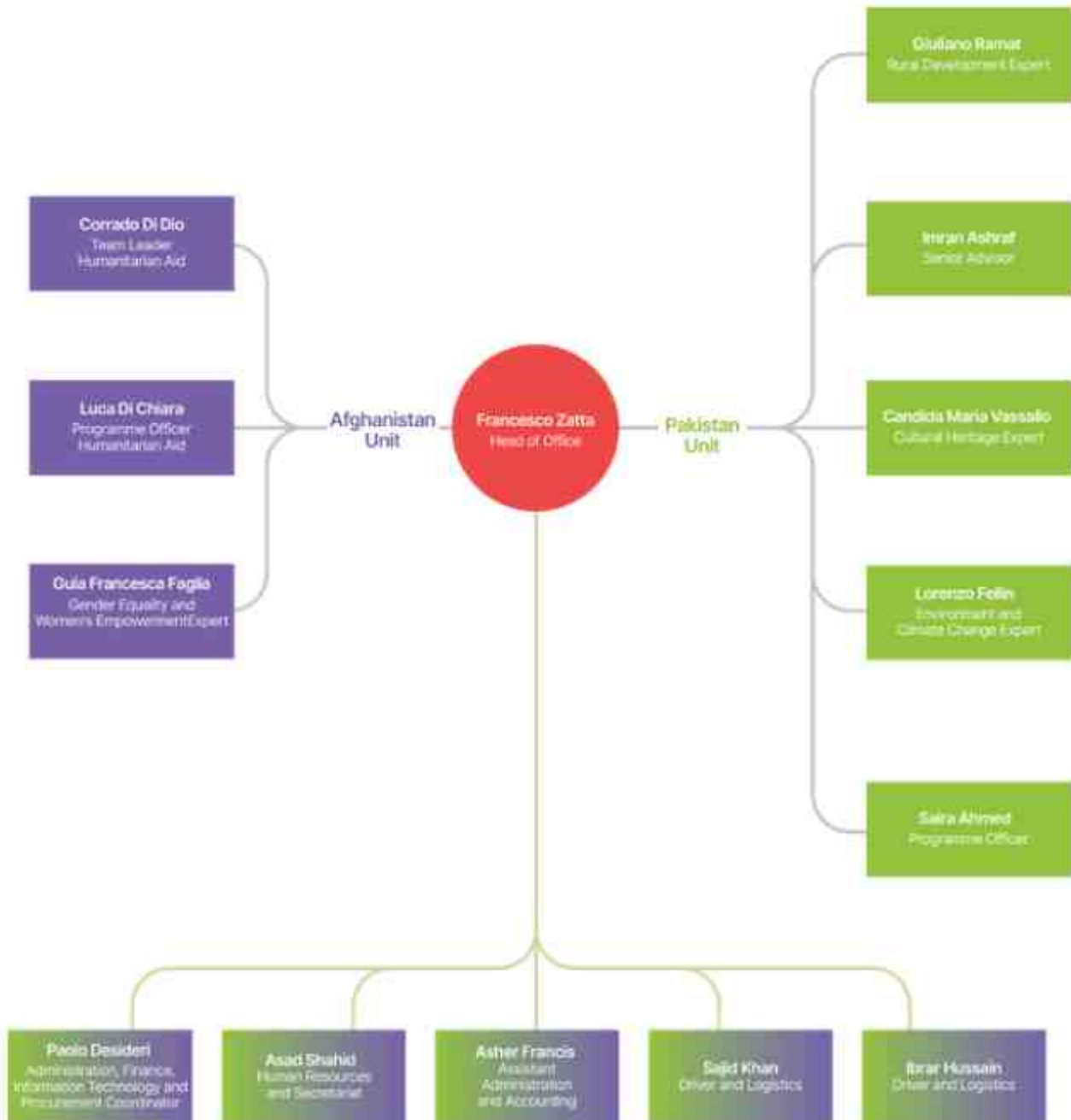
skills of young people and adults and foster decent employment in various sectors.

Gender equality and social inclusion: promotion of the economic empowerment of women and girls, through interventions that integrate the gender perspective and mainstream the inclusion of the most disadvantaged sections of the population.

Sustainable tourism: support for initiatives that enhance natural and cultural resources, promoting social inclusion and creating opportunities for decent work through alternative livelihoods.

Humanitarian assistance: adoption of an integrated approach linking humanitarian assistance, development, and resilience-building, coupled with active engagement in coordination mechanisms and a strong emphasis on the regional dimension, particularly in addressing emerging needs related to migration dynamics.

Organogram



During 2025, Luca Nichetti, expert on environment, agriculture, and climate change in Pakistan, and Emanuela Gasbarroni, expert on communications and visibility, who served at the AICS Islamabad, took on new roles outside this office.

16

Main Events and Meetings 2025



January: Signing of the agreement to build a "farm to market" road that will improve access and economic opportunities for 364 families under the Economic Transformation Initiative (ETI) in Gilgit-Baltistan.



February: Eurovillage 2025 – Two flagship projects funded by the Italian Cooperation through AICS are on display: Radio Education and OliveCulture.



March: AICS Islamabad organized a capacity-building training course on Gender Equality on International Women's Day 2025.



April: Consultative assessment, in collaboration with ILO Pakistan, on inclusive markets, livelihoods and access to essential services for brick-making communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Head of Office, Francesco Zatta spoke at the event.



May: The launch of the "Resilience and Adaptation by Fostering Anticipatory Actions (RAFAA)", initiative to strengthen climate resilience in Pakistan, together with the Ambassador, H.E. Marilina Armellin, and the FAO Country Representative in Pakistan, Florence Rolle.



July: The awareness-raising session on Gender Equality for officials in the Gilgit region organized within the "Economic Transformation Initiative (ETI)" in Gilgit-Baltistan.



June: The organic olive oil cream produced by one of the Women's Entrepreneurial Development Groups of the project "Scaling up OliveCulture value chain and promoting climate resilient rural development in Pakistan and promoting climate-resilient rural development in Pakistan" and the brochure of the exhibition dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan. Celebration of Italian Republic Day, June 2, 2025.



August: The launch of the collaboration between Italy and ILO to encourage sustainable employment and promote economic inclusion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the presence of the Ambassador, H.E. Marilina Armellini, of AICS Head of Office, Francesco Zatta and ILO Country Representative in Pakistan, Geir Thomas Tonstol.



October: Recurrent regular meeting on the presentation of the Portfolio of Italian Cooperation projects in Pakistan. This meeting is attended by technical officials from Pakistani public institutions and representatives of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) Islamabad, coordinated by the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Economic Affairs.



September: The first meeting of the Steering Committee of the "Radio Education" project, implemented by UNESCO Pakistan, brought together partners to define the strategic direction and guide the implementation of the project.



November: Project progress monitoring mission in Swat composed of "Monitoring mission to assess the progress of projects in Swat, comprising of AICS Deputy Director Giuseppe Cerasoli, AICS Administrative Officer Federica Massoli, and AICS Islamabad Head of Office Francesco Zatta.



December: 2025 "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence" campaign at AICS Islamabad Office.



Projects

17

Person

Rural Development

OLIVECULTURE-II SCALE-UP - Scaling up Olive Culture Value Chain and Promoting Climate Resilient Rural Development in Pakistan

Grant-funded project

Ordinary Channel Multi-Bilateral art. 5 L. 125/2014

Deliberation Joint Committee N. 28 09/04/2024

Agreement Signed on 26/07/2024

Duration 36 months
01/09/2024 - 31/08/2027

Value € 3,000,000

Tranche 1st: € 999.640 - 28/08/24
2nd: € 1.300.050 - 20/11/2025

Beneficiaries Direct: 56,110 people (19% females) including individual farmers, farmers' associations, as well as local and government institutions. Indirect: 220,000 people

Executing Entity CIHEAM Bari



Counterpart Ministry of National Food Security and Research



Ministry of National Food Security & Research
Government of Pakistan

SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The project aims to support the promotion of the olive sector as a driver for rural development, the **strengthening of food security, and the reduction of national dependence on imported edible oils.** Building on the results achieved by the previous OliveCulture project and in synergy with the national program "Promotion of Olive Cultivation on Commercial Scale in Pakistan," the initiative seeks to foster the growth of the sector in a context characterized by expanding cultivated areas but still modest production levels.

In line with national priorities for agricultural development and the enhancement of local products, the project adopts an inclusive approach focused on strengthening the capacities of farmers, nursery operators,



Photo credits: CIHEAM Bari

businesses, research centers, and public institutions, with particular attention to the participation of women and youth.

The objective is to **increase both the quality and quantity of olive oil** production through the enhancement of local nurseries, the dissemination of good agricultural, harvesting, and processing practices, the consolidation of quality control and analysis systems, and support to institutions in the definition of policies and standards, thereby **making the value chain more efficient, sustainable, and competitive.**

Results

In order to improve the quality and quantity of olive production and to develop the climate resilience of the sector—whose indicators will be available in 2027 due to the crop’s physiological timelines—the project has carried out activities supporting

institutions both through technical training and the drafting of **guidelines for nursery certification**, approved in December 2025, and the **National Olive Sector Policy**, currently under approval.

The first organoleptic and sensory laboratory for olive oil in Pakistan, aligned with international standards, was inaugurated, and an three additional research laboratories were supported. Training cycles on **Good Agricultural Practices** and Master Trainer certification were conducted; these Master Trainers subsequently trained local technicians. A total of 40 technicians and nursery managers received training on Advanced Nursery Production Technologies for olive trees, together with 133 operators and mill managers. Continuous support was also provided to 27 olive farms and to a network of 41 **Entrepreneurial Development Groups** on the creation and marketing of olive-derived products.

ETI - Economic Transformation Initiative in Gilgit Baltistan, Italian Co-financing of the Economic Transformation Initiative

Soft Loan	
Ordinary Channel	Bilateral art. 8 L. 125/2014
Deliberation	Joint Committee N. 58 13/06/2016
Agreement	Signed on 08/08/2019
Duration	01/07/2023 - 30/06/2028
Value	€ 20,500,000
Tranche	1st: € 5,000,000 - 01/2023
NCE	n. 1 NCE with a 12-month extension
Beneficiaries	Direct: 100,000 rural families Indirect: 1,000,000 residents of GB
Executing Entity	Planning and Development Department (P&DD) of Gilgit Baltistan (GB)
SDGs	

Project Outreach



Description

The Economic Transformation Initiative in Gilgit-Baltistan is a USD 120 million development programme of the Government of Pakistan, co-financed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Italy, aimed at supporting rural development in Gilgit-Baltistan. In this context, the prevalence of poverty is closely linked to fragmented landholdings, limited access to credit, weak market integration, and the insufficient availability of support services for rural producers. The initiative therefore seeks to **contribute to increasing agricultural incomes and employment opportunities** by supporting the transition from subsistence-based production systems to a more diversified, competitive, and market-oriented agriculture.



In line with national priorities on rural development and poverty reduction, the project operates through a combination of investments in economic infrastructure—particularly irrigation systems, land development, and rural roads—and accompanying measures aimed at strengthening agricultural value chains, promoting the organization of smallholder farmers, and reinforcing linkages with the private sector. The overall objective is to enhance productivity, facilitate market access, promote high-potential commercial crops, and foster an inclusive and climate-resilient development model, with specific attention to women, youth, and small-scale farmers.

Results

Through Italian co-financing, agreements have so far been signed for the establishment of 25 Village Agricultural Cooperatives (VACs) and 6 Public–Private–Producer Partnerships (4Ps). Furthermore, out of the 28 planned and approved interventions, construction activities are currently underway for 15 **Farmers-to-Market Roads (FMRs)** and 5 **Irrigation Land Development (ILD)** schemes, alongside the completion of 4 cycles of technical training.

Person

Rural Development

TVET - Professional Capacity Building and Extension in Agriculture - **Technical and Vocational Education and Training**

Soft Loan

Ordinary Channel Bilateral art. 8 L. 125/2014

Deliberation Joint Committee N. 59 09/03/2026

Agreement Under signing process

Duration 48 months

Value € 20,000,000

Beneficiaries

Total 18,808 beneficiaries
5,640 farmers; 1,760 rural extension workers; 340 trainers; 2,270 rural women; 4,260 rural youth; 1,568 technical staff; 1,870 producers; 660 service providers; 440 researchers and academics

Executing Entity

Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R), Pakistan Oil Seed Department (POD)

Counterpart

Economic Affairs Division



Ministry of National Food Security & Research
Government of Pakistan

SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The programme has been designed to **support the reform of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** in Pakistan, with a focus on the agricultural sector across all provinces and territories of the country. This takes place in a context where agriculture remains a central component of the national economy, yet food insecurity, climate vulnerability, outdated value chains, and an inadequate training system continue to constrain the transition towards a more modern and market-oriented agriculture.

In line with national priorities on **human capital development, food security, and climate adaptation**, the initiative aims to strengthen technical and vocational skills in key agricultural sub-sectors—particularly in **fruit production and horticulture**—through



specialized training programmes, accredited technical qualifications and certifications, as well as improvements in curricula and extension and advisory services.

The programme also seeks to contribute to the upgrading and **strengthening of public infrastructure** for training, experimentation, demonstration, and agro-food processing. This includes support for model nurseries and orchards, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable farms, diagnostic laboratories, processing facilities, training hostels, and centres of excellence dedicated to high value-added agricultural value

chains. The overall objective is to promote sustainable rural development, reduce food insecurity and poverty, increase employment opportunities and economic returns from agricultural production, and **strengthen collaboration among farmers, extension services, researchers, institutions, and the private sector**, with particular attention to the inclusion of women and youth.

Results

The initiative is in the start-up phase, through the signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement and the Financing Agreement.

Person

Rural Development

CDCP II - Contribution to the Second Phase of the Pakistani Government's Assistance Program for Assistance to the Victims of the 2010 and 2022 Summer Floods

Soft Loan

Ordinary Channel Bilateral art. 8 L. 125/2014

Deliberation Joint Committee N. 7 25/07/2011

Agreement Signed on 12/04/2012

Duration 06/11/2012 – 30/06/2015

Value € 57,750,000

Tranche 1st: € 15,000,000 - 06/11/2012
2nd: € 15,000,000 - 28/01/2013

Beneficiaries 1,000,000 people affected by exceptional flooding

Executing Entity National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA)



SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The programme aims to address the profound social and economic repercussions caused by the **floods that struck Pakistan in 2010, when monsoon rains affected approximately 20 million people, resulted in over 1,900 fatalities**, and caused widespread damage to housing, infrastructure, crops, and livelihoods. This occurred in a context of marked vulnerability, later confirmed by **the extreme events of 2022, which affected 33 million people and caused more than 1,730 deaths**.



In this context, the Pakistan's Citizens Damage Compensation Program (CDCP) has been designed as **a cash transfer programme targeting the most affected rural households**, with the objective of supporting the restoration of living conditions and economic activities. This is implemented through vulnerability criteria agreed upon with national and local institutions, and through secure, biometric, and traceable registration and payment mechanisms.

Planned activities include the identification, verification, transparent selection, and registration of beneficiaries; the management of payments through dedicated banking channels; as well as communication and community awareness initiatives on assistance mechanisms and access to support.

The overall objective is to provide support to affected households while, at the same time, structurally strengthening national social protection and disaster risk management systems through technical assistance, improved targeting systems, and enhanced monitoring and evaluation, thereby increasing the resilience of communities and institutions to future crises.

Results

An analysis of the dossier is currently underway with the government counterpart for the redeployment of undisbursed funds amounting to 27.5 million euros.

Person

Rural Development

Kurram Tangi Dam Project: implementation of the irrigation scheme under Component 1

Soft Loan

Ordinary Channel Bilateral art. 8 L. 125/2014

Duration 48 months

Value € 17,625,925.70
42.5 million euros pledged

Beneficiaries 69,000 people (7,500 families) including 17,500 women and 2,000 youth

Executing Entity Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Department of Agriculture, On Farm Water Management (OFWM)



SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The project was designed to **promote the socioeconomic development of rural communities in North Waziristan, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province**, through the development of the irrigation scheme envisaged under Component 1 of the Kurram Tangi Dam Project. This forms part of a broader strategic intervention aimed at strengthening water security, irrigated agriculture, and the valorization of local resources.



Photo credits: ETL

In a context characterized by limited access to water for productive purposes and significant socioeconomic vulnerability, the initiative aims to bring 16,000 acres (approximately 6,500 hectares) under cultivation and livestock production through canal construction, land leveling, and the establishment of irrigation systems.

In line with rural development priorities and the strengthening of local livelihoods, the project also includes the enhancement of agricultural services, aimed at the establishment of orchards, the use of fertilizers, and the seasonal vaccination of small and large ruminants. The expected

benefits target approximately 10,000 rural households (around 70,000 people), each with access to land plots ranging from 0.5 to 1.5 acres.

The **objective is to support the productive reintegration of populations returning to their areas of origin**, sustainably expand cultivable land, and promote more efficient and sustainable water resource management.

Results

The initiative is being evaluated for feasibility.

Planet

Environment and Climate

W4D - Water for Development – Support to Mountain Sustainable Development and Adaptation Policies

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Multi-Bilateral art. 5 L.125/2015
Deliberation	Joint Committee N. 29 09/04/2024
Agreement	Signed on 06/06/2024
Duration	36 months 01/09/2024 - 31/08/2027
Value	€ 3,000,000
Tranche	1 st : € 1,000,000 - 28/06/2024 2 nd : € 1,250,000 - 19/09/2025
Beneficiaries	Direct: 1,400 community members, universities, and provincial authorities Indirect: resident population in GB

Executing Entity UNDP Pakistan



Italian Partner EvK2-CNR



Counterpart Government of Gilgit Baltistan - GB



SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The project stems from the growing need of Pakistan's mountain communities to strengthen their **resilience to climate change and to improve the management of available natural resources**. In line with the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Plan 2023–2030 (NAP), the initiative places water at the center of its actions, recognizing the crucial role of glaciers in ensuring the country's water security.

The interventions aim to reduce environmental risks through the establishment of glacier and water resource monitoring systems, as well as by **strengthening livelihoods and supporting the development of policies and strategies for the sustainable management of natural resources**.



Acknowledging that tourism represents both an opportunity for development and a potential driver of environmental risk and degradation, the project focuses on the promotion of ecotourism, with the objective of **ensuring the proper and sustainable valorization of community resources**.

Results

The project is improving the capacity to **monitor glaciers and water resources** through the installation of specialized equipment for data collection and analysis. The involvement of local departments and universities ensures the sustainability of the systems developed. To date, 61 students and staff from local departments have been trained in the collection and analysis of satellite data for monitoring glaciers and glacial lakes.

To strengthen the sustainable management of agricultural and livestock value chains,

the project has equipped **three specialized laboratories** (water quality, phytopathology, and animal health) at local universities and has trained 151 technicians, operators, and students (target: 151). Laboratory analyses have already led to the issuance of technical bulletins, disseminated to farmers through the Department of Agriculture's extension services, promoting the adoption of good practices.

In parallel, the project promotes the **sustainable management of the tourism value chain**. In collaboration with the Department of Tourism, social, economic, and environmental assessments have been conducted in the Thalay Valley, where future interventions are planned. A community-based ecotourism management group has been established, and 387 individuals have been sensitized on ecotourism, environmental conservation, and climate change-related risks.

RAFAA – Resilience & Adaptation by Fostering Anticipatory Action

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Multi-Bilateral art. 5 L.125/2014
Deliberation	Joint Committee N. 222 16/12/2024
Agreement	Signed on 16/05/2025
Duration	36 months 17/07/2025 - 16/07/2028
Value	€ 4,000,000
Tranche	1 st : € 1,096,612 - 17/07/25

Beneficiaries 175,000 members of the community, Beneficiaries of the climate-smart & DRR interventions

Executing Entity FAO Pakistan
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Italian Partner CESVI


Counterpart Agriculture Department of Government of Sindh


SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The project aims to **strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities in the face of climate change** by helping them **develop the capacity to respond and adapt to extreme events**. The objective is to reduce risks and promote sustainable practices that ensure a safer environment and stable livelihoods.

Through an integrated approach, the initiative enhances **multi-hazard early warning systems** by expanding them with **water quality monitoring** tools and **community resilience plans** that include anticipatory action protocols. In this way, communities can be alerted in a timely manner and provided with clear guidance on how to **protect themselves before a disaster occurs**.

AID 013193/01/0



At the same time, the project operates in Sindh to **strengthen and diversify livelihoods** by introducing more climate-resilient agricultural practices and crop insurance schemes, thereby reducing farmers' economic losses in the event of extreme shocks.

In addition, the initiative seeks to strengthen institutional capacities at national, provincial, and local levels. Institutions are supported with tools and training to better identify risk factors and improve decision-making processes, ensuring more timely and effective responses to the challenges posed by climate change.

Results

The project is currently in its inception phase, which is focused on the development of tools preparatory to the operational stage. The partnership with CESVI has been formalized, and a **multidimensional vulnerability analysis has been completed** for all districts in Sindh. This analysis is based on exposure to natural disasters (floods, droughts, and heat stress) and on three key indicators: poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition. This assessment represents the main source informing the **selection of priority districts** for intervention. The selection will be approved by the Steering Committee, expected in early 2026.

Ecosystem Services and Creating Job Opportunities. Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Mountain Areas

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Multi-Bilateral art. 5 L.125/2014
Deliberation	Joint Committee N. 113 18/12/2019
Agreement	Signed on 11/02/2021
Duration	02/07/2021 - 30/06/2026
Value	€ 940.000
Tranche	1 st : € 398,539 - 02/07/21 2 nd : € 299,564 - 15/02/24 3 rd : € 241,896 - 10/04/25
NCEs	3 no-cost extension variants
Beneficiaries	Member Institutions in 5 partner countries
Executing Entity	FAO  Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Italian Partner	La Sapienza, CESVI  
Counterpart	Institutions in partner countries
SDGs	     

Project Outreach



Description

The initiative aims to improve the living conditions of rural communities through the **sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in mountainous areas**, across countries participating in the Mountain Partnership (MP). The project seeks to strengthen institutional capacities through the application of methodologies designed to **analyze environmental and socioeconomic vulnerabilities, using information technologies** to develop **action plans for sustainable development** in the targeted mountain areas of the participating countries (Afghanistan, Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, and Pakistan).



Results

To strengthen the technical and institutional capacities of partner countries in the management of natural resources and to define clear and actionable environmental strategies, the project established and capacitated dedicated national task forces. These were trained in the application of methodologies aimed at identifying socioeconomic and environmental risk factors affecting local mountain communities. These **vulnerability analyses** were conducted at the national level in all participating countries. Additional in-depth assessments at the provincial and local levels were carried out in three countries (Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, and Pakistan).

In Kyrgyzstan, analyses were conducted to identify solutions to **reduce the negative impacts of water scarcity** in the At-Bashy district, in the Naryn region.

In Montenegro, targeted studies were carried out to estimate the Tourism Carrying Capacity (TCC), with the aim of **assessing the impact of tourism on Durmitor National Park**.

In Pakistan, surveys were conducted to identify **priority sites for the construction of water reservoirs**, through the integration of satellite imagery and the direct involvement of local mountain communities.

Prosperity

Education and Decent Work

JUST TRANSITION - Professional Training and Job Creation in Eco-building and Eco-tourism in the Flooded Districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Multi-Bilateral art. 5 L.125/2014
Deliberation	Joint Committee N. 223 16/12/2024
Agreement	Signed on 14/05/25
Duration	36 months 26/05/2025 – 25/05/2028
Value	€ 2,000,000
Tranche	1 st : € 653,141 - 26/05/25
Beneficiaries	10,000 community members & provincial authorities
Executing Entity	ILO Pakistan 
Italian Partner	ISCOS 
Counterpart	Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & HR Development (MOPHRD) 
SDGs	     

Project Outreach



Description

The project was conceived in **response to the severe employment and infrastructure losses caused by the 2022 floods**. The intervention focuses on two of the most affected sectors in the province—**construction and tourism**—promoting resilient reconstruction through the principles of sustainable building. Specifically, the initiative aims to support the **green transition of brick kilns**, encourage the adoption of low-impact construction techniques, and revitalize the ecotourism sector.

In line with the government's Skills for All strategy under the Prime Minister's Programme 2023–2026, the project seeks



to **enhance human capital by providing vocational and entrepreneurial training**. Through the development of tailored curricula and certified courses, the initiative plans to train approximately 10,000 individuals—with a primary focus on women and youth—who will collectively contribute to the economic resilience and green transition of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Results

The **project has completed its preliminary phase**, which focused on developing the tools required for the operational stage. In addition to the establishment of the Project Advisory Committee, responsible for overall supervision, the initiative was officially

launched in Peshawar (KP) through an Inception Workshop held on 4 December 2025. The technical assessments carried out have enabled the identification of priority districts, selected based on the extent of damage caused by the 2022 and 2025 floods. Work is already underway on the development of a **new curriculum on zig-zag technology to support the green transition of brick kilns**, in collaboration with the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) and universities. Furthermore, dialogue has been initiated for the creation of a **'National Skill Passport'** for the sustainable construction sector, in line with the national qualifications and skills framework.

Prosperity

Education and Decent Work

BELIEF – Well-being, Empowerment, Work, Education and Training

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Bilateral Call for Christian Minorities 2023
Deliberation	Joint Committee N. 3414 15/12/2023
Agreement	Signed on 15/02/24
Duration	24 months 01/06/24-30/05/26
Value	€ 1,299,160
Tranche	1 st : € 740,522 - 18/04/24 2 nd : € 493,681 - 17/12/25
Beneficiaries	17,578 students, teachers, vulnerable workers and members of the community

Executing Entity

ISCOS



Italian Partner

Don Bosco Youth Centre



Counterpart

Pakistan Workers Federation (PWF)



SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The project aims to **improve the quality of life of vulnerable communities** in Punjab Province through an integrated approach that combines education, **vocational training, labour rights, access to essential services, and the promotion of interfaith dialogue.**

Activities include strengthening the provision of primary education, training youth and adults to enhance employability, raising awareness of labour rights, and creating more sustainable economic opportunities. In addition, the project envisages the organization of cultural and interfaith events to foster social cohesion and combat discrimination.



Results

The project has promoted access to quality education and training services by training 92 teachers from 21 schools in pedagogy and child protection. At the same time, **school infrastructure has been upgraded** through the installation of solar panels and water filtration systems, the creation of multifunctional common spaces, and the renovation of sanitation facilities. In addition, **769 scholarships** have been awarded for eleven vocational training courses, and over 1,300 books have been distributed to students and school libraries.

The initiative has also strengthened awareness among vulnerable communities in Punjab regarding **fundamental rights** by

delivering 66 workshops on human and labour rights and 60 on health and hygiene, reaching a total of more than 3,400 participants.

At the same time, the project has promoted the protection of the rights of marginalized groups through four conferences (Panchayat), focusing on **peaceful coexistence, interfaith dialogue, equal opportunities** in the labour market, and the political representation of minorities. These events brought together 396 participants.

In the final phase of the project, currently underway, activities are focusing on the organization of cultural and sports events aimed at promoting the values of **peaceful coexistence and countering discrimination through dialogue**.

Prosperity

Education and Decent Work

DECENT WORK - Promotion of Decent Employment Opportunities for the Economic Strengthening of the Vulnerable Segments of Society

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Multi-Bilateral art. 5 L.125/2014
Deliberation	Joint Committee N. 106 29/09/2017
Agreement	Signed on 13/12/17
Duration	01/01/2019 - 30/06/2025
Value	€ 1,500,000
Tranche	1 st : € 700,000 - 09/11/18 2 nd : € 800,000 - 21/01/22
NCEs	n. 5 no-cost extensions
Beneficiaries	13,211 workers, family members, & government officials
Executing Entity	ILO Pakistan 
Counterpart	Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & HR Development (MOPHRD)  Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & HR Development Government of Pakistan

SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The project was designed to strengthen institutional capacities and promote **decent work** in Pakistan, with a specific focus on the **brick kiln sector, social protection**, and the engagement of the **Pakistani diaspora in Italy**.

Following the 2022 floods, the intervention was reoriented towards the most affected areas (KP), where reconstruction efforts have generated a growing demand for environmentally sustainable bricks, essential to reduce the environmental impact of the sector, which is considered one of the contributing factors to the severe extreme weather events that have affected the country.



In collaboration with trade unions, the project has improved access to social services and promoted the adoption of safer labour practices. Through dialogue between institutions and communities, the initiative has also strengthened sector governance and increased awareness of environmental sustainability.

Results

The project has strengthened the system for monitoring and combating child and forced labour in brick kilns through functional literacy programmes that reached over 11,300 workers and kiln owners, as well as through the training of 370 government officials who are members of the District Vigilance Committees (DVCs), the bodies responsible for oversight activities.

The project has also reinforced the social protection system by contributing to the development of the **first social protection**

policy in KP, supporting campaigns to expand **access to social security**, and promoting the alignment of the Employees' Social Security Institution (ESSI) regulations with international standards. Engagement with the Pakistani diaspora in Italy has been ensured through targeted campaigns aimed at promoting business-to-business investments and disseminating information on initiatives introduced by the Government of Pakistan to facilitate foreign investment.

The green transition of the sector in KP has been promoted through the mapping of 450 brick kilns across the province and the production of dedicated studies on the benefits of **zig-zag conversion**. In addition, access to social protection programmes has been facilitated for 544 workers and their families, and three **alternative livelihood models** have been identified for women and youth within the community, particularly in the transport and textile sectors.

Prosperity

Education and Decent Work

RISE - Strengthening Employment and Vocational Training for Vulnerable Girls and Women in Pakistan

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel Bilaterale Call CSOs 2023

Deliberation Joint Committee
N. 1191 28/03/25

Agreement Signed on 21/05/25

Duration 36 months 15/09/2025-
14/09/2028

Value € 1,999,220

Tranche 1st: € 1,399,454 - 27/06/25

Beneficiaries 3,400 students, teachers
and local authorities

Executing Entity ISCOS



Counterpart Technical Education and
Vocational Training Authority
of Punjab (TEVTA-Punjab)



SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The project was designed to address the challenges that many women in Pakistan face in accessing education, vocational training, and the labour market. To overcome these barriers, activities include courses with updated curricula, more inclusive learning environments, and better-trained teachers. In addition, the project supports internships and apprenticeships in local enterprises, enabling women to apply the skills they have acquired.

AID 013244/06/7



Through these approaches, and in collaboration with public institutions, trade unions, employers' associations, and international partners, the project aims to **foster the inclusion of vulnerable women in the labour market**, contributing to their empowerment and to improved living conditions in local communities.

The initiative is fully aligned with Pakistan Vision 2025, Pillar I – People First, which places **human capital development and**

women's empowerment at its core, as well as with the Punjab Growth Strategy 2023, which highlights gender equality, equal opportunities, and dignity in women's work and lives as key drivers of sustainable economic growth and social development.

Results

The project is currently in the start-up phase.

Prosperity

Cultural Heritage

RADIO EDUCATION - Promotion of Learning through Radio in Isolated Areas of Pakistan

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Multilateral Art. 5 L. 125/14
Deliberation	Joint Committee n. 116 09/06/2023
Agreement	Signed on 10/10/2023
Duration	42 months: 06/11/2023 - 26/04/2027
Value	€ 990,000
Tranche	1 st : € 530,000 - 06/11/23 2 nd : € 460,000 - 04/12/2025
NCEs	n. 2 NCEs and 18-month extension
Beneficiaries	Direct: 12,000 students, 250 teachers, 30 officials, 75,000 listeners (30,000 children) Indirect: parents and community members
Executing Entity	UNESCO Pakistan 
Counterpart	Departments of Education of the provinces of GB, KP and Balochistan 
SDGs	    

Project Outreach



Description

The project was initially conceived in the post-COVID-19 context to **support continuity of learning in remote areas of Pakistan through radio-based education**. It was subsequently adapted to respond to the growing educational needs linked to the impacts of climate change and the frequent natural disasters affecting the country. In addition, it contributes to national efforts to address the education access crisis, in line with the **Education Emergency** declared by the federal government in 2024, aimed at promoting school enrolment for approximately 26 million out-of-school children.



In line with these priorities, the project uses radio programmes to deliver educational and training content on **Global Citizenship Education (GCED)** and **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**, including Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The objective is to strengthen community resilience, support school access and attendance - particularly for girls - and enhance the capacities of teachers and education officials at the district level.

Results

To reach 75,000 people through access to radio programmes, a total of 140 lessons (GCED, ESD) and 30 cultural programmes

have been developed. These **broadcasts have been airing on a weekly basis** from July 2025 to May 2026 on three local radio stations and on the social media channels of the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. At the same time, **capacity-building activities** are underway for 250 teachers on the use of two **manuals on sustainability education** developed through the project and adopted by the Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Since the start of the initiative, more than 6,300 students have been engaged in sustainable practices, and 627 young people have participated in TVET training and awareness-raising campaigns.

Prosperity

Cultural Heritage

GIRLS EDUCATION – Support to the Female Education Sector and Cultural Heritage Preservation through Education in Pakistan

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Multilateral art. 5 L.125/2014
Deliberation	Joint Committee n. 111 27/10/2016
Agreement	Signed on 07/09/2017
Duration	21/03/2018 al 30/04/2026
Value	€ 1,500,000
Tranche	1 st : € 700,000 – 21/03/2018 2 nd : € 800,000 – 26/03/2021
NCEs	n.3 NCEs + Use of Residual Fund with extension of 18 months
Beneficiaries	Direct: 8,000 girls, 200 teachers, 1,137 pupils/s, local businesswomen. Indirect: 22,330 community members and people of the Provinces.

Executing Entity

UNESCO Pakistan



Counterpart

Ministry of Education
Government of Pakistan



SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

The project operates in the education and culture sectors through an integrated approach that supports government efforts to **increase girls' enrolment and school attendance, improve the quality of education in remote areas**, and, at the same time, promote the **safeguarding of cultural heritage** through educational, training, and awareness-raising activities targeting youth.

In 2025, the initiative incorporated a component on **climate change education and disaster risk reduction** through heritage-based approaches, in line with UNESCO's 'Greening Curriculum Guidance' (2024) and the 'Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage framework' (2021).



Photo credits: UNESCO Pakistan

Results

In the **education sector**, the project contributed to increasing girls' school enrolment, with 8,934 new female students enrolled (against a target of 8,000) across 110 primary schools. It also strengthened the quality of education through the rehabilitation of 122 schools, the training of 435 teachers in Activity-Based Learning (ABL) and Multi-Grade Teaching (MGT), and the capacity building of 10 education officials.

In the **cultural sector**, 1,230 students across 69 schools and 2,500 young people were engaged in educational and training activities for heritage safeguarding. In addition, 151

teachers were trained, and collaboration between culture and education departments was strengthened through the integration of cultural education into school curricula.

In the **environmental sector**, through the living classroom methodology and the involvement of 16 schools, the project integrated hands-on learning of indigenous technical knowledge during the implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) interventions at 8 historical sites along a 242 km corridor in Chitral Bashkar Garam Chashma. This area has been recognized as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 2023.

Prosperity

Cultural Heritage



Professions for climate Adaptation, eco-Tourism and Heritage

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel	Bilateral art.24 L.125/2014
Deliberation	Joint Committee n. 218 16/12/2024
Agreement	Signed on 15/04/2025
Duration	36 months 01/06/2025-31/05/2028
Value	€ 3,000,000
Tranche	1 st : € 1,200,000 - 23/04/2025

Beneficiaries
 Direct: 2,450 university students, technicians and workers.
 Indirect: 17,000 members of the community, KP population and tourists

Executing Entity Ca' Foscari University of Venice



Counterpart Directorate General of Archaeology and Museums of the KP (DGOAM)



SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province is **highly exposed to natural hazards** that damage cultural heritage and the tourism sector, exacerbating local socio-economic vulnerabilities. However, with over 6,000 archaeological sites, **heritage represents a strategic resource** to strengthen resilience, employment, and social inclusion through **responsible tourism**.

In this context, and building on the results achieved by the Italian Archaeological Mission in the Swat Valley, the project aims to **enhance the safeguarding and promotion of cultural heritage for the socio-economic well-being of local communities**. To this end, it envisages: strengthening the capacities of relevant authorities in heritage protection



and tourism valorization; expanding **cultural tourism itineraries through the conservation and restoration of archaeological sites, including those damaged by the 2022 floods**; enhancing technical and vocational education and training (TVET); and consolidating the responsible tourism value chain at the provincial level.

The project is developed along a 125 km **cultural route connecting eight archaeological sites, from the Swat Valley to Taxila**, following ancient historical pathways.

Results

On 25 October 2025, the **first Steering Committee meeting** was held, officially marking the launch of project activities. During the first semester, Ca' Foscari University, in coordination with project partners, carried out the first excavation campaign at **four archaeological sites, employing and training 100 workers**.

In addition, **renovation works began on a traditional *bandai* house** as part of the community-based hospitality system. Finally, **the environmental and socio-economic impact assessment was completed across four sites**.

Prosperity

Cultural Heritage

HFS - Heritage Field Schools

Development of Professional Skills in the Management of Cultural Heritage in KP

Grant-funded Project

Ordinary Channel Bilateral art. 8 L.125/2014

Deliberation Joint Committee n. 154 09/10/2023

Agreement Under negotiation

Duration 36 months

Value € 4,159,000

Beneficiaries Direct: 400 DOAM KP technicians, police and customs staff, university students and community members
Indirect: populations residing in the KP.

Executing Entity Directorate General of Archaeology and Museums of the KP (DGOAM, KP)



Counterpart Ministry of Economic Affairs, Economic Affairs Division (EAD)



SDGs



Project Outreach



Description

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, with over 6,000 archaeological sites, holds significant **potential for sustainable development linked to cultural heritage**. However, the lack of adequate management plans, specialized centres and laboratories, and qualified personnel limits the effectiveness of **conservation, restoration, and valorization** activities.

To address these gaps, this soft loan initiative aims to strengthen cultural heritage management by improving protection measures and building capacities in conservation, restoration, and promotion. To this end, **equipped centres and laboratories**

AID 012786/01/0



will be established where specialized technicians and workers will receive certified training and carry out hands-on, on-the-job activities at excavation sites.

At the same time, provincial police forces and customs officers will benefit from dedicated training programmes to enhance their capacity to **protect cultural heritage**, preventing theft, illicit trafficking, and damage to cultural assets. In parallel, provincial officials will receive targeted training on **cultural heritage governance**, with the objective of improving planning,

coordination, and the overall effectiveness of interventions across subsectors.


Overall, the initiative seeks to promote an integrated and professional approach to cultural heritage management by strengthening specialized skills and technical and operational networks for its protection, conservation, and valorization in KP.

Results

The negotiation of the intergovernmental agreement and the financing agreement is currently ongoing.

Support to Afghan Refugees and Asylum-seekers and to Host Communities in Pakistan

Grant-funded Project

Deliberation	Of the Vice Minister N.81 19/12/2024
Humanitarian Channel	Multilateral art. 10 L.125/2014
Duration	12 months 01/01/2025-31/12/2026
Value	€ 1,000,000
Areas of intervention	Urban and peri-urban areas in Sindh, Punjab, KP and in the capital of Islamabad.
Gender Marker	Significant objective
Beneficiaries	Direct: 120,000 individuals Indirect: Pakistan's entire registered refugee population
Executing Entity	UNHCR Pakistan 

Project Outreach



Description

The initiative provided a comprehensive response to the needs of **approximately 120,000 Afghan refugees and asylum seekers in Pakistan**, with the aim of ensuring an integrated approach addressing **gender-based violence (GBV), child protection, and community protection**. At the same time, it promoted access to **income-generating opportunities for refugees, asylum seekers, and host communities**, thereby increasing the number of self-reliant individuals.

AID 013129/01/0




Results

Activities were completed on 31 December 2025. During the first semester, the initiative achieved significant results: in the area of **GBV, 227 women and girls** received **integrated case management services**, while **prevention and awareness-raising activities reached over 9,000 people**. In the field of child protection, 11,550 children and caregivers benefited from dedicated services, with improved quality of interventions (**70% of cases managed through Best Interests Procedures**) and strengthened community-based structures that engaged **nearly 8,000 children**.

Community protection activities reached approximately 6,000 individuals and reinforced feedback and response mechanisms, with over **34,000 requests addressed**. At the same time, the groundwork was laid for market-oriented vocational training programmes.

Overall, the intervention ensured access to essential services for vulnerable populations, strengthening their resilience and self-reliance. UNHCR will present the full results achieved over the 12-month duration of the initiative in its final report.



 Embassy of Italy
Street 17, Diplomatic Enclave, Islamabad

 +92 (0) 51.846.05.76
 segreteria.islamabad@aics.gov.it
 islamabad.aics.gov.it
 [AicsIslamabadNew](https://www.facebook.com/AicsIslamabadNew)