

Aik Saath program update #1

[Problems viewing this email?](#)

[Click to view in your browser](#)



Program Update

Edition #1 | April 2017

Welcome to this first newsletter from the Aik Saath agricultural “Research for Development” (R4D) program.

Aik Saath is all about *partnerships*: between farmers, research groups, value-chain participants and governments. In particular, Aik Saath will support men and women smallholders as they discuss and define their roles in their family

The Urdu phrase Aik Saath has been borrowed as the everyday name for the Agriculture Value Chain Collaborative Research program (AVCCR) program. Working together, everyone involved in this large and complex program is working towards the goal:

That **rural poor**, particularly **women**, living in the Punjab and Sindh significantly and equitably benefit from improvements in strategic **value chains**.

Contents

1. [Background](#)
2. [Aik Saath Project Updates](#)
3. [Aik Saath Partnership Updates](#)
4. [Annual Program Meeting and Reference Committee Meeting – July 2017](#)
5. [Thirty Years of ACIAR in Pakistan](#)
6. [ASLP Legacy Projects News](#)
7. [Agriculture and the rural economy in Pakistan - Issues, outlooks, and policy priorities](#)
8. [Aik Saath Program Coordinator and in-Country ACIAR team](#)

Background

The Aik Saath projects cover agricultural value-chains where Australian and Pakistani knowledge and research have great potential to deliver benefits. The value-chain focus requires a wide range of different problem-solving skills. It

Aik Saath builds on partnerships, experiences and lessons learnt during the 10 years of the Agriculture Sector Linkages Program (ASLP). This was also jointly supported by ACIAR and DFAT and concluded in September 2015. ASLP left a legacy of valuable results for farmers and a set of guiding principles for the Aik Saath government and research partners to adopt:

1. The projects address researchable issues that unlock the potential of value chains.
2. The program is 'agricultural research for development' rather than development per se.
3. A key outcome is pro-poor benefit flows.
4. Women's economic empowerment is paramount.
5. Smallholder needs will guide a blend of technical and social science problem-solving
6. Innovative private sector linkages within the value chains will be sought.
7. There is purposeful engagement and response to the priorities of our Pakistan partners.

[Back to contents](#)

Aik Saath Project Updates

Dairy/Beef



The new Dairy/Beef project follows a decade of research in smallholder dairy/milk production within ASLP — “Improving Dairy Value Chains in Pakistan through Improved Extension Services”. Many of the same highly experienced team members remain involved as the project starts to get underway.

The focus has broadened from milk production to seeking entry to the beef market. This time, the "whole family extension approach" developed under ASLP will be delivered through upstream and downstream value-chain partners. If successful, this will expose thousands more farmers to the improved husbandry practices and marketing approaches.

8.8 million

**Number of
smallholder dairy
farmers in Pakistan—
most owning fewer
than 10 animals**

Work is also underway on the project’s second objective—to better understand the value chains for beef in Pakistan. Project Consultant, Tony Dunne, recently visited Lahore to train team members in value chain analysis. This involved “walking the chain” to follow beef’s farm-to-market journey as well as interviewing many of the people involved in the beef trade.

the market. This includes linkages with DFAT's Market Development Facility (MDF), which has active projects with fodder seed, silage and feedlot partners.

For further information contact the project leaders:

- Dr David McGill University of Melbourne david.mcgill@unimelb.edu.au
- Dr Hassan Warriach University of Veterinary and Animal Science, Lahore hassanwarriach71@yahoo.com

Pulses



Three pulse crops were selected for their potential to contribute to the goal of Aik Saath: Gram (Chickpeas), Lentils and Groundnuts (Peanuts). While demand for pulses is growing, production in Pakistan has failed to keep up, due both to production challenges and policy settings. A three-pronged approach is underway: Firstly, a new ACIAR project is to test improved varieties for disease susceptibility, weed management and suitability for mechanical harvesting with a range of farmers.

Meanwhile, researchers at the University of Western Australia and the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) are studying the impact of current policies. Recent presentations to federal and provincial policymakers were very

A third pulse project within Aik Saath will build on the policy findings as well as farmer concerns identified in the production research. Aik Saath Pulses will harness these different perspectives to better understand pulse value chains. The aim always is to optimise opportunities for smallholder engagement for profit. This will also require alliances with other provincial and federal government pulse initiatives, as well as drawing on lessons from the international research community.

Horticulture



As with pulses, the Aik Saath horticulture project is being strengthened by policy research to study and explain the environment in which smallholders are operating. Firstly, Monash University's policy research is studying the marketing systems in Pakistan.

At one level, this is clarifying the barriers to smallholders recouping a fair return for their efforts. These include access to better varieties, production challenges, and tools to help understand and respond to market requirements. At a broader level, the “big issues” of rural transformation, urbanisation and globalisation are bringing new challenges and constraints to Pakistan's horticulture marketing system. To provide lasting value, our work must prepare smallholders for these changes.

cultivate vegetables, fruits and cereals in four districts. This identified the main production and business worries for farmers and the policy measures that can be adopted to alleviate these. A small follow-on study has commenced to study one of these issues—access to credit.

The Aik Saath Horticulture design team selected four key vegetable crops—potatoes, tomatoes, onions and chillies, which between them encounter a wide range of marketplace challenges. The team was advised through industry workshops and meetings held in Punjab and Sindh in November 2016. It selected CABI (based in Islamabad) as project leader and several collaborating institutions in both Australia and Pakistan. These agencies are working hard towards a starting date in mid-2017.

Goats and Small Ruminants



A preliminary 12-month project is underway to map and analyse goat value-chains from farms through intermediaries to markets and consumers. This involves researchers from the University of Melbourne, the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Lahore and the National Agricultural Research Centre in Islamabad. By analysing demand, production systems, and marketing systems, this will lay the groundwork for a larger research project around goats and small ruminants

Number of goats in Pakistan

Aik Saath Goats and Small Ruminants has a strong participatory element—ensuring the needs of male and female smallholder goat farmers are captured and that these project outputs. This work is underway, using social research methods, to understand the roles of men and women by engaging with villagers at the community level. The team is also investigating private sector links, as private sector engagement will be vital to linking farmers with the value chain.

[Back to contents](#)

Aik Saath Partnership Updates

1. ACIAR Pakistan Water Program launched



An important partner for Aik Saath is the Australian Government's AUD15m Water Program in Pakistan. This was launched in January by Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Margaret Adamson and Federal Minister for Defence Production and Minister for Science and Technology, Rana Tanveer Hussain.

the water projects to commercial value chains .

2. Linkages with DFAT's Market Development Facility (MDF)



Aik Saath is developing linkages with the private sector to explore value-chain opportunities for smallholder growers. Partnering with the DFAT-funded Market Development Facility (MDF) offers great potential synergies. Combining the technical know-how from the Aik Saath teams with the market insights and value-chain connections generated by MDF may reveal new opportunities.

While its initial focus is on dairy and meat, leather, and horticulture, MDF has a large team of business and market analysts that cover all the Aik Saath sectors. Overall, MDF aims to stimulate growth in sectors that represent a major part of the economy, have long-term growth prospects and are relevant for poverty reduction.

<http://marketdevelopmentfacility.org/content/where-we-work/pakistan/>



Aik Saath Coordinator, Gerard McEvelly (3rd right), ACIAR Country Manager, Munawar Kazmi (2nd right) with MDF Country Representative – Pakistan Country Team, Jon Marlow (4th left) and senior MDF staff held a joint briefing session in February

[Back to contents](#)

Annual Program Meeting and Reference Committee Meeting – July 2017

Early July 2017 is an important time for Aik Saath. It will include:

- Second annual meeting of the Reference Committee (6th July)
- First joint Program Meeting of all the projects (5th July)
- Gender training

The Aik Saath Reference Committee is the senior source of advice and guidance on the program. It is co-chaired by the Secretary, Economic Affairs Division, GoP and the Head of Development Cooperation, DFAT and includes high-level personnel from Pakistan Government Agencies.

The Reference Committee operates at a strategic level in providing oversight guidance to the program. This includes reviewing program outputs with reference to the proposed Impact Pathway. It also focuses on cooperation & collaboration from all Pakistani partners and departments as well as opportunities to enhance collaboration between the program and related R&D in Pakistan.

[Back to contents](#)

Thirty years of ACIAR in Pakistan

This new publication from ACIAR highlights the long history of Australia and Pakistan working together to address agricultural challenges. It states “Similarities in water resource and salinity issues between Australia and Pakistan mean that agricultural scientists from the two countries are well-placed to help each other combat these challenges”.

Aik Saath is an important part of the next stage of this collaboration. The booklet also describes other important elements of ACIAR’s R4D investments in Pakistan, which include a strong focus on capacity building – helping equip tomorrow’s researchers with the skills needed into the future. The booklet can be accessed at: http://aciarc.gov.au/files/tr_91_web.pdf

ASLP Legacy Projects News

Planning for the Aik Saath program took into account the challenges and opportunities emerging from ASLP and the lessons learned. Importantly, the research, extension and partnerships developed over the ten years of ASLP are continuing to yield results. These are either of direct industry impact, such as increasing fruit exports, or of potential value to the Aik Saath teams in understanding the approaches that work best over the longer term.

Therefore, Aik Saath has a role in monitoring the ongoing impact and lessons from ASLP. The past achievements of ASLP are summarised in an edition of the ACIAR magazine Partners in Development, available online:

<http://aciar.gov.au/publication/pmg052>

1. ACIAR monograph Published

The citrus and mango projects within ASLP both included a strong focus on improving the quality and health of nursery trees—the foundation of any tree crop sector.

This involved significant research with Pakistani nurserymen and research institutes to develop techniques suitable for local adoption. It also included extensive hands-on training, enabling women and men to develop nursery enterprises

This manual captures this knowledge base and will be of great value not only for the Pakistani citrus and mango industries—many of the key principles are

2. Mango and citrus exports expanding

Both the mango and citrus production projects in ASLP worked on improving fruit quality all the way from growing the crop to packing, shipping and out-turn. This type of work can take years to progress through lengthy trade negotiations and verification of protocols into export sales.

A separate mango value chain project in ASLP worked with several distinct value chains serving both domestic and export markets. The export focused work included partnerships with other agencies working in the mango sector, such as USAID who funded vital pack-house infrastructure. Partnerships included training retail staff in Tesco supermarkets in the UK to monitor and maintain fruit quality.

Thanks to the ongoing involvement of partners such as the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and USAID's Agriculture Market Development (AMD) program, the pioneering work of ASLP helped mango exports increase to an estimated 215,000 tonnes in 2016.

Meanwhile, the ASLP citrus work has proven crucial in opening up export markets for Pakistan's favourite citrus fruit—the Kinnow mandarin. This included a value-chain scoping that targeted Indonesia as an existing market with growth potential. USAID recently supported a major launch into Indonesia, having assisted with negotiations to remove trade barriers. For more information visit this link www.freshplaza.com/article/169773/USAID-helping-increase-kinnow-trade-between-Pakistan-and-Indonesia

Kinnow exporters are also recognising China's potential as a major importer of quality fruit. For more information on this aspect visit this link:

[Back to contents](#)

New Book: Agriculture and the rural economy in Pakistan - Issues, outlooks, and policy priorities

The International Food Policy Development Institute is a research centre of the CGIAR, a worldwide partnership engaged in agricultural research for development. This new IFPRI publication seeks to answer the questions: Can Pakistan's agricultural sector and rural economy recover from recent poor growth to play a significant role in growth and development? Can it contribute to poverty reduction? The analyses and conclusions in Agriculture and the Rural Economy in Pakistan may be of value to policy makers, development specialists, and others concerned with Pakistan's development. For more information visit this link <http://www.ifpri.org/publication/agriculture-and-rural-economy-pakistan-issues-outlooks-and-policy-priorities>

[Back to contents](#)

Aik Saath Program Coordinator and in-Country ACIAR team

Pakistan, having undertaken the ASLP citrus value chain scoping study and jointly reviewed the ASLP mango projects and the citrus project. Gerard runs Horticulture Supply Chain Services, a consultancy practice covering supply chain management, sustainability and the links between them. This includes topics as diverse as carbon foot-printing, biomass energy, soil carbon and food regulation/safety.

Previously, Gerard managed R&D programs on many horticultural crops with Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL), focusing on creating linkages between R&D and marketing. He also led major whole-of-industry sustainability initiatives, including the Horticulture for Tomorrow—Environmental Assurance program and the Horticulture Water Initiative. He produced a horticulture careers guide and taught honours and masters students at the University of Sydney for six years.

Gerard is delighted to have the opportunity to support the skilled and experienced teams involved in [Aik Saath](#). This includes the ACIAR Research Program Managers in charge of the individual projects as well as the ACIAR Country Manager Pakistan Munawar Kazmi and assistant Noor Batool and the DFAT Development Co-operation team in Islamabad.

Dr Munawar Kazmi Munawar.Kazmi@aciarcg.gov.au +92 51 8355 367

Noor Batool noor.batool@aciarcg.gov.au +92 51 835 5408

Gerard McEvelly gerard.aiksaath@gmail.com +61 409 047117

Follow #ACIARPakistan (ACIAR Country Office Pakistan) for updates

Feedback or ideas for future editions? Please get in touch



Copyright © 2017 ACIAR, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

