Program Update

Edition #3 | December 2018

Welcome to this Aik Saath newsletter. It provides an update on the agricultural Research for Development (R4D) Program supported by the Governments of Pakistan and Australia.
Aik Saath is an Urdu phrase meaning Together.
This signals the joint government commitment to the work as well as other aspects of collaboration that are vital to its success, such as between:

- multiple agricultural products. themes and research disciplines

- numerous technical, commercial and official partners in Australia and Pakistan

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Aik Saath Program broadens its links

of four agricultural value chain projects was launched in December 2015 and scheduled to run to September 2020.

AVCCR was designed as a collaborative program of diverse projects covering cattle, small ruminants, pulses and vegetable crops. Despite this diversity, the projects share a common focus on value chains and their impact on smallholder livelihoods. This is summed up in the Program Goal:

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

AVCCR was a joint initiative between DFAT and ACIAR, with strong support from the Government of Pakistan. It was designed to build on the success of their previous Agriculture Sector Linkages Program (ASLP) which ran from 2006 to 2015.

However, ACIAR's agricultural R4D in Pakistan is much more diverse than these four AVCCR projects. It includes studies on irrigation and water supply management as well as policy studies related to finance, horticulture and pulses. Several of these projects already had links with the new AVCCR initiatives. Therefore it makes sense to adopt the core principle of Aik Saath - achieving more by working together - for all the ACIAR projects in Pakistan.
This broader adoption of Aik Saath was locked in by over eighty stakeholders from all ten ACIAR projects as they exchanged ideas at the Annual Meeting in September. This is summarized in the next section.

Meanwhile, the history of partnership between DFAT and ACIAR in Pakistan is a strong foundation for future planning with the Government of Pakistan. This includes the bilateral development of ACIAR's draft ten-year "compact" and DFAT's

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ACIAR's R4D Program in Pakistan

Current ACIAR projects in Pakistan

ADP/2014/043: Policy & Institutional Reforms to Improve Horticultural Markets in Pakistan

ADP/2014/045: Efficient participatory irrigation institutions to support productive and sustainable agriculture in South Asia

ADP/2017/004: Developing modern value chains of pulses in Pakistan

CIM/2014/081: Mitigating the effects of stripe rust on wheat production in South Asia, Eastern Africa & Australia

CIM/2015/041: Increasing productivity & profitability of pulses production in Cereal based cropping systems in Pakistan

HORT/2016/012: Strengthening vegetable value chains in Pakistan for greater community livelihood benefits

LPS/2016/011: Improving smallholder dairy and beef profitability by enhancing farm production and value chain management

LPS/2018/105: Enhancing small ruminant production to benefit the livelihoods and wellbeing of small ruminant farming families (building on LPS/2016/096: Smallholder goat value chains in Pakistan challenges and research opportunities)

LWR/2015/036: Improving groundwater management to enhance agriculture and farming livelihoods in Pakistan

LWR/2015/074: Developing approaches to enhance farmer water management skills in Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh in Pakistan

CIM/2016/174 Improved mungbean harvesting and seed production systems for Bangladesh. Myanmar and Pakistan

ADP/2016/043 Economic analysis of policies affecting pulses in Pakistan

 Pulses .  Small Ruminants .  Dairy & Beef

Grains . Water . Horticulture

Fact Sheets are available for all these projects from gerard.aiksaath@gmail.com
(Website coming soon)

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Annual Meeting Highlights

In September, teams and partners from all the current ACIAR Pakistan projects met in Faisalabad. The meeting enabled the individual project teams to explore collaborations within the broader Aik Saath team. All ACIAR projects already include diverse skillsets and experience across different physical science disciplines and often extending to social sciences, economics and market analysis.

However, this event extended this diversity as, for the first time, every project team learnt about all the other projects and the broader scope for collaboration.

Rather than a dry "talk & chalk" exercise, this was arranged as:

- Pre-circulated project fact sheets
- Poster displays and photo competition
- Timed three-minute presentations from each project covering:
- .....What we offer for collaboration
- .....What we are looking for through collaboration
- And followed by a 12-minute brainstorm with participants

Later team and inter-team sessions expanded this initial brainstorming into Collaboration Action Plans.
The agenda also covered several program-wide topics including:

- "What do we really understand about value chain";
- "how are we progressing with gender inclusiveness";
- "Are there options for Aik Saath to contribute to nutrition goals";

- "How can we establish an annual Impact Pathway Analysis & Monitoring, Evaluation, Review and Learning (M&ERL) cycle".

The 85 participants engaged enthusiastically and responded very positively to the opportunity. In their responses to the online survey, they reported that the planned outputs of the Annual meeting were broadly achieved. As always, participants were asked to recommend improvements to the content and conduct of the meeting and these will be taken into account next time.

Which of the planned outputs were achieved?	
1. Understanding of why collaboration is essential to maximize success of AIK SAATH	88%
2. Teams develop a plan for collaboration along with time line and committing some resources to it	55%
3. Understanding of why gender mainstreaming is essential to maximize success of AIK SAATH	67%
4. Co-learning from sharing project management challenges & strategies for addressing these	60%
5. Identifying some other topics we should work on that are common across all or many projects and essential to maximize success of AIK SAATH	79%
6. None of the planned outputs were achieved	0%

A summary report covering all the sessions and the online evaluation is available on request.

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Lessons about Gender Inclusion

The Goal of Aik Saath is to ensure that both women and men in smallholder families benefit from the research and the improved value chains.

have agreed that this goal requires each individual team member considering gender inclusion at every stage of their project activities.

This approach is call "mainstreaming" and each team has a plan to achieve this through an ongoing learning process. Regular reviews of progress, drawing on lessons to update plans will improve the research - ensuring the results are relevant to women and men and that benefits flow to the family. The Annual Meeting was a great chance to do this.

At the Annual Meeting, teams had a chance to share their learning. It included interviews, panel discussion, q&a and group working sessions with 'gender' experienced teams responding to the following questions from less gender experienced teams:

i. What have you done?;
ii. What has worked?;
iii. Why did it work?;
iv. What will you keep doing?;
v. What new things will you try?;
vi. What will you stop or drop?;
vii. What are you general gender lessons?

The printed version of the Aik Saath Gender Inclusion Strategy was available for the meeting and was officially launched by Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls (Sharman Stone) with HOM in Islamabad the following week.

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DAIRY_BEEF

Scaling out dairy production information through partners: The project has successfully engaged 50 field staff from twenty-one extension organizations across the country. These partner staff now integrate the "whole family extension approach" into their own field activities.

The project team has completed two training workshops to provide a creative and engaging learning environment. This allows for sharing our experiences as well as providing participants with the opportunity to share and learn from each other.

As reported in the last newsletter, the Dairy_Beef team is playing closer attention to observing impact at the household level from their technical recommendations. This approach was captured in the dairy-beef project's gender outcome: "The agency of members of the smallholder farming families is enhanced through equal engagement in the AVCCR project activities".

To investigate this, the team completed a study to assess impact observed by women engaged in its extension program. The degree of change was assessed using three indicators (resources, agency and relation). Evidence collected reveals the program has had a positive impact on those that participated in the extension program.
Importantly, there are a number of factors that facilitate or constrain attendance at meetings, adoption and sustainability of adoption.

Understanding beef value chains: The project has investigated opportunities for increasing the profit from the beef component of dairy farms. Options include on-farm efficiency improvements and increasing the market value of the products. The project has mapped and analysed beef value chains to identify value chain opportunities and constraints for smallholder farmers. It will form and support farmer business groups to enable smallholders to identify and access more profitable beef markets.

Producing Beef efficiently and profitably: Our applied research team have included farmers in the first annual Research Focus Group (RFG) workshop to prioritise and plan participative research, including:
(1) strategies to obtain year round fodder availability. Includes:
- utilising perennial/alley cropping; and
- developing a seasonal feed formulation app.
Farmers are now testing improved fodder seed varieties, providing opportunities to

(2) addressing optimal reproductive outputs (e.g calf per year) designed to inform at both a policy and farming level.

For further information see project fact sheet or contact the project leaders:
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Dr Hassan Warriach University of Veterinary and Animal Science, Lahore & University of Melbourne hassanwarriach71@yahoo.com

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SMALL RUMINANTS

Preliminary research extended with full project to start shortly: A preliminary 12-month Small Research Activity (SRA) was undertaken from January to December 2017 (LPS/2016/096: **Smallholder goat value chains in Pakistan challenges and research opportunities**). The findings from the SRA justified the development of a full project proposal. The SRA was extended through 2018 to address initial research questions while the full proposal was developed as: LPS/2018/105: **Enhancing small ruminant production to benefit the livelihoods and wellbeing of small ruminant farming families.**

Participative Research with smallholders in 10 districts on Animal Health (Goats): Although there are large government programs providing free animal health services, medications and vaccines to farmers, intermittent supply of medication means that treatments are inconsistent or are poorly timed, limiting their efficacy or dramatically reducing the efficiency of these large-scale activities. This appeared to be particularly relevant for vaccination campaigns. Service providers and smallholders differed in their perceptions about extension services.

Participatory research on feeding methods and feed sources: Based on the participatory responses from the SRA, farmers across the 12 districts represented two major farming systems: **mixed livestock** farming systems and **small ruminant only** farming systems.

While there were differences based on agro-ecological zone, there were also broad village-based differences, assessed with resource scores. An overall resource score was assigned to each of the villages in our participatory rural appraisal.

Rapid value chain analysis: This identified four interlinked mutton value chains -
1. A 'Traditional Domestic' value chain supplying traditional wet markets;

chilled meat in supermarkets and speciality butcher shops;
3. An 'Export' value chain, shipping chilled carcases by air to shops and consumers, especially expatriate Pakistanis, in the Middle East;
4. A 'Religious' value chain in which animals are purchased for sacrifice during festivals such as Eid-al-Adha (Eid) and for other religious observances. (income derived from by-products like wool, milk and leather were not very common in Punjab or Sindh.)

three groups: resource-poor (<4), moderately resourced (4-5), and resource-rich (6-8).

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Dr Angus Campbell University of Melbourne a.campbell@unimelb.edu.au

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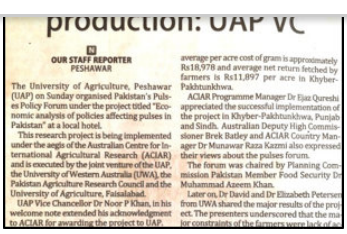
PULSE CROPS

The Government of Pakistan (Federal, Punjab and others) has expressed great interest in the pulses sector and in the potential of the ACIAR projects to provide insights. There are three closely integrated ACIAR projects covering different aspects of this important group of products: Pulses Policy; Pulses Production; and Pulses Value Chain. An additional project is focused on mung bean harvesting.

A recent Mid-term Review of the Pulses Production project in early November was also an opportunity to review how the results and future plans of these projects link to Pakistan government leaders and initiatives. This should lead to integration with the GoP Public Sector Development Program (PSPD) Pulses 10-year "Megaprogram" to expand, scale out and sustain the research outcomes.

Pulse Policy:

Consumption of pulses in Pakistan and globally is increasing. Despite this, pulses production in Pakistan is stagnant. Imports of pulses have risen dramatically to address increasing domestic consumption. This project considered policy options to address constraints to pulses production in Pakistan. Based on their empirical


production: UAP VC

OUR STAFF REPORTER
PESHAWAR

The University of Agriculture, Peshawar (UAP) on Sunday organised Pakistan's Pulses Policy Forum under the project titled "Economic analysis of policies affecting pulses in Pakistan" at a local hotel.

This research project is being implemented under the aegis of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and is executed by the joint venture of the UAP, the University of Western Australia (UWA), the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council and the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

UAP Vice Chancellor Dr Noor P Khan, in his welcome note extended his acknowledgment to ACIAR for awarding the project to UAP.

average per acre cost of gram is approximately Rs18,978 and average net return fetched by farmers is Rs11,897 per acre in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

ACIAR Programme Manager Dr Ejaz Qureshi appreciated the successful implementation of the project in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh. Australian Deputy High Commissioner Brek Batley and ACIAR Country Manager Dr Munawar Raza Kazmi also expressed their views about the pulses forum.

The forum was chaired by Planning Commission Pakistan Member Food Security Dr Muhammad Azeem Khan.

Later on, Dr David and Dr Elizabeth Petersen from UWA shared the major results of the project. The presenters underscored that the major constraints of the farmers were lack of ac

developed:For further information see project fact sheet or contact the project leaders:Dr Elizabeth Petersen, The University of Western AustraliaDr Ata ur Rehman
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- # 1: Remove the 35 per cent export tax on pulses
- # 2: Phase out the wheat procurement policies
- # 3: Phase out fertiliser, water and energy subsidies
- # 4: Don't introduce a Government procurement price for pulses.
- # 5: Increase spending on pulses research, development and extension.
- # 6: Focus on social protection programs targeted to those in need.
- # 7: Aim to achieve food security through import and export diversification of pulses

The team leaders presented these conclusions at three end-of-project policy forums in Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi (with a total of 120 policy stakeholders in attendance) and at numerous individual meetings with policy stakeholders.

The project was implemented by the University of Western Australia, the National Agricultural Research Centre (Pakistan), the University of Agriculture Faisalabad, the University of Agriculture Peshawar and the Australian National University. The project team are now partnering with the new Value Chain project to provide policy context to its market analysis and VC facilitation.
For further information see project fact sheet or contact the project leaders:
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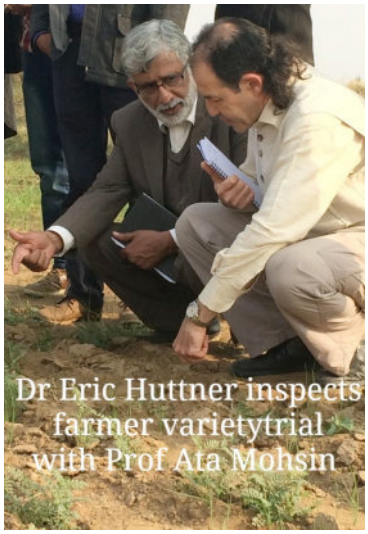
Pulses Production:

This focuses on the three areas of People, Production and Post-Harvest. The People component will establish Groups for Collaborative Research. These farmer-driven groups will dictate research priorities based on their experiences in each of six project sites, with 15 families involved per site.

Results of an extensive two-stage Situation Analysis were shared at the Mid-Term Review. As a major focus of the project's first 18 months, this major study informs

production and dissemination) and 4 (Scaling out).

The analysis to date illustrates the fundamental biophysical constraints (residual soil moisture from different cropping patterns, availability of irrigation etc) in each region. It also identifies site-specific and family-specific norms and patterns of interaction. Together, these influence attitudes by farm families to addressing other constraints such as: improved varieties; rhizobial innoculants; direct seeding; pest, disease and weed management; harvest mechanisation; postharvest handling and marketing.


Dr Eric Huttner inspects farmer varietytrial with Prof Ata Mohsin

In parallel to the social research, initial variety screening trials on farmer properties are now entering their second season with recent chickpea and lentil sowing. The Mid-term Review team learned that recent Groundnut Site Field Days had generated interest and immediate adoption by some farmers of practices such mechanical harvesting, postharvest grading and improved varieties. The varietal trials are based on the limited NARC germplasm evaluation work to date. (NARC's sound management and promising results to date help inform any varietal aspects of the planned PSDP including the potential role of Australian germplasm.)


Project Officers Maman, Tehreem and Israr link the research to the farm families

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Pulse Value Chain

Value-chains focus on efficiently meeting consumers' needs. Consumers exercise choice in every transaction they make and this choice reverberates through the value chain to impact farmers. It may appear that in a market that is under-supplied, such as the Pakistan pulse market, intervening to "open the tap" on supply is enough (such as changing tariff policy or controlling a disease). However, this approach fails to take into account inefficiencies in the flow of information about consumer needs and market dynamics.

One classic example of this is the "whiplash effect", where small fluctuations of demand or price at the consumer end of the value chain translate into large

However, the same effect applies in markets that are apparently less volatile such as stored grains or even manufactured goods. Markets will always be dynamic but robust value chains can deliver more sustainable and equitable profits for farmers than simple boosting production.

In response, this project focuses on creating, delivering and equitably sharing greater value from domestically produced pulses (as opposed to focusing solely on supply). It aims to build capability at producer level as well as to facilitate linkages with value chain partners. This offers a socially inclusive way of reducing poverty among male and female smallholder pulses growers in Pakistan. As the project objectives make clear, this integrates and complements the vital past and future findings from the policy and production projects:

- To identify and analyse barriers, opportunities and options for developing inclusive competitive pulses value chains
- To strengthen the capacities of pulses industry stakeholders and actors
- To inform policy that facilitates the development of inclusive competitive pulses value chains
- To demonstrate successful value chain development methods and practices for scaling out of pulses value chains

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Mungbean Harvesting and Seed Production Systems for Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan

The high cost and shortages of labour at the time of harvest are key constraints to mungbean production in Pakistan and this prevents expansion of production at a time when it is in high demand. Machine harvesting using modified cereal harvesters is much faster than traditional methods and has been used for decades in Australia. It needs to be modified to be suitable for the smallholder farms of Pakistan. This multi-national project is being managed by the World Vegetable Centre in Taiwan.

desiccated before harvest. A range of desiccants have been tested in combination with different harvester types at NARC, Islamabad and Arid Zone Research Institute (AZRI), Bhakkar during Kharif 2018.
For further information see project fact sheet or contact the project leader (Pakistan): Dr Shahid Riaz Malik (NARC) Shahriz5@yahoo.com

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NON-PULSE CROPS

Wheat Stripe Rust

Stripe (or yellow) rust is one of the most severe rust diseases of wheat. Epidemics cause heavy yield losses when untreated. Fungicide treatment is expensive, not always available to smallholder farmers, and may not be sustainable over the long term. Coordinated by the University of Sydney with partner organisations in Ethiopia, India, Nepal and Pakistan this project aims to reduce the vulnerability of wheat crop to stripe rust in South Asia and Eastern Africa.

The team is studying his problem from both ends - (i) how does the disease organism evolve and spread to trigger new global epidemics? and (ii) which genes in the plant confer resistance to these various strains? One of the goals is to repeat the team's breakthrough with stem rust (reported last time) - a DNA test that can quickly tell whether or not new rust strains are able to overcome a resistance bred into current wheat varieties. This will be an ongoing series of battles, so the high-level training for staff of partner organisations at the Plant Breeding Institute in Sydney is crucial to equip the next generation of "wheat rust warriors".
For further information see project fact sheet or contact project leader: Dr Robert Park robert.park@sydney.edu.au

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HORTICULTURE

Vegetable Value Chains

This project is ambitious in scale and coverage, addressing value chain issues in four diverse crops (onions, potatoes, tomatoes and chilies) across multiple sites in Punjab and Sindh. The team has adopted SVVCP as the overall name for this project, from: Strengthening Vegetable Value Chains in Pakistan (SVVCP) for

Since commencing in January, the team has published two quarterly newsletters, published in April and August 2018 and available on request. These documents also introduce the teams and their respective roles, providing a good overview of the project.

Some of the highlights have been:

- Inception Meeting (January)
- Five key positions of Research Associates (RAs) have joined the project team after passing through a competitive selection process. The RAs joined CABI CWA at Rawalpindi on April 4, 2018 and each is responsible for coordinating with specific partners and other across-project roles
- April 2018, 25 persons nominated from the partner organisations participated in "walk-the-chain" activity.
- Partnerships and outreach meetings were held with different agricultural research, educational and extension institutes (beyond those already engaged) to explore the opportunities for partnership, cooperation and support for this project
- Field Visits by Social Science Team for training and Baseline Survey
- Separate to the baseline survey, village profiling research collected quantitative data from farmers in the selected villages. The purpose of which was to record the socio-economic situation of farmers to form farmer groups for receiving training and capacity building
- Participation in agriculture expo in Lahore on 23-34 June 2018
- Capacity building workshop on 27-30 June 2018 with Dr. Tony Dunne, a value chain expert from Australia. The participants engaged in exercises to develop their value chain analysis skills.
- (July) Visit of Australian Consultants in Pakistan to visit fields of target crops to observe diseases and production related issues.
- (July) A project progress and planning review meeting was held at University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

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Horticulture Policy and Institutional Reforms

The marketing system is widely considered to be one of the main constraints to the

investigating existing marketing arrangements and assessing domestic and overseas market potential. The team will draw on both Pakistan and International reform experiences to formulate an appropriate marketing policy reforms programme.

The recent Mid-term review noted the potential to integrate this work with new SVVCP project (Above). Pakistan's horticulture industry is dominated by smallholders with strong participation of women and has a key role in the government's development strategy. Horticulture has huge growth potential in both domestic and export markets, noting that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor will provide preferential access to the world's fastest growing horticulture market.

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WATER PROGRAM

The Australia Water Program in Pakistan includes three ACIAR projects. Each project is highly participatory, enabling the communities involved to drive their own research agenda. Each is also engaged with multiple local partners to build local capacity. This will enable ongoing attention to these key challenges in water management as well as scaling out solutions. The Water projects are complementary, sharing ideas and experiences as well as seeking collaboration with other ACIAR Pakistan projects.

Efficient Participatory irrigation

This project asks "how well does it work to pass responsibilities in irrigation to farmers?". This concept is known as Participatory Irrigation Management/ Irrigation Management Transfer (PIM/IMT). The project looks at the merits of this approach in different settings in South Asia, (Punjab and Sindh in Pakistan and Assam and Bihar in India) and responds to farmer input.

The data gathering generated significant interest from respondents. Many farmers noted that the survey had prompted them to think about issues that had largely been taken for granted.

In addition, the end user feedback has prompted the team to adapt its approach.

design, a gender survey was administered to measure the benefits and costs of being involved in water groups from a woman's perspective.

The training opportunities for researchers and government staff are also notable. Women enumerators were specifically trained for the administration of the gender survey and in some jurisdictions this provided a chance for women working in the irrigation departments to play a prominent role in the research.
For further information see project fact sheet or contact the project leader:
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Improving groundwater management

Dependence on groundwater has increased with over one million tubewells in use. Groundwater decline and spread of salinity is rendering fertile lands unusable. This project aims to build capacity of researchers, farmers, farming communities and relevant government and non-government agencies to improve groundwater management in ways that enhance farming family livelihoods.
The project's three case study areas comprise different agro-ecological settings across three provinces:

- The Pishin Lora Basin in Balochistan, with two villages selected as case studies.
- The Lower Bari Doab Command area in Punjab, with two distributaries selected as case studies.
- The Shaheed Benazirabad (formerly Nawabshah) and Naushahro Feroze Districts of Singh, with a distributary selected for each of the two districts.

Capacity building initiatives included:

- Partners are collating and analysing data to be used to model case study groundwater systems.
- Training in GIS has facilitated improved understanding of how data can be used to develop models.
- Three hands-on workshops have been provided for partners to plan and develop groundwater models. All three provincial irrigation departments have reported significant technical capacity building as a result.
- Six team members attended a training workshop with AgImpact in May 2018 in the development and use of Mobile Acquired Data for efficient survey work.

Dr Michael Mitchell Charles Sturt University mimitchell@csu.edu.au

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Water management skills

This project aims to develop and scale out tools and approaches for increasing farmers' irrigation management skills, and hence their livelihoods, on small- and middle-sized irrigated farms.

> Farzana cultivated spinach, coriander, garlic, radish, tomatoes and cut the fresh green vegetables from the field. She learned how to cultivate her garden keeping in mind the best way of seed sowing and irrigation.
> *"I am thankful to this irrigation project for their support and to make me independent. I will use this money for my children's school fees."*

Farmers with small to medium holdings have had little access to technologies for irrigation, as affordable and accessible tools are neither produced nor widely distributed in Pakistan. Extension approaches to farming in Pakistan occur in two ways: the traditional top-down, expert-to-farmer approach; and the interactive Farmer Field School (FFS) approach. Through rigorous research, this project will identify the successful elements of existing on-farm irrigation water management initiatives in Pakistan for future scaling up of this vital information.

The project now has a total of 31 sites in six districts: Nawab Shah and Tandojam in SIndh; Quetta in Balochistan; and Bahawalpur, Sargodha and Faisalabad in Punjab.

- Each village has one learning model employed - either Discovery Learning, Value Management or Collaborative Problem Solving. The learning approaches in this project have successfully engaged women and youth, once considered inactive in project activities.
- Baseline data in 10 sites have been completed to determine the impact analysis on farmers' livelihoods.
- A two-day event celebrating International World Water Day 2018 on "Sustainable Irrigated Agriculture under Changing Climate" was held in Punjab. Some 32 farmers, including 16 women, attended along with other ACIAR project teams and provincial government organizations,.

languages.

wasting their money.
They have saved 1-3 irrigations while increasing the yield by 2-6 monds per acre (1 mond = 37kg).

For further information
see project fact sheet or contact the project leaders:
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Aik Saath Partnership Updates

There are also many opportunities for external collaboration, most immediatelty with other DFAT initiatives in Pakistan as well as with related work by ACIAR in other regions, as follows:

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DFAT PROJECTS IN PAKISTAN

Linkages with DFAT's Market Development Facility (MDF)

Both Commercial Insight and Technical Know-how are essential to address shortcomings in productivity and marketing sustainably. Therefore, there are great potential synergies from close interaction between Aik Saath and the MDF team in Pakistan. These synergies are explored through regular communication at program level as well as through the enthusiastic involvement of the MDF team in Aik Saath Meetings.

The Annual Meeting in September was a great opportunity for all the project teams to develop collaboration plans with MDF. Also MDF and Aik Saath launched their jointly developed Infographic. This describes the different and complementary roles of the two initiatives in supporting smallholders. It uses the seed sector as the example because this is common to all crops as well as for livestock fodder production.

Linkages with Australia Balochistan Agribusiness Programme (AUSABBA, Phase II)

the United Nations in collaboration with the Government of Balochistan. The programmme covers 6 districts near the Afghan/Iranian border: Chagai, Kech, Kharan, Nushki, Panjgur and Washuk. The program focuses on onions, fruit trees, goat and sheep meat, seed, wool and dates.

Collaboration between AusABBA, MDF and Aik Saath are being explored, with the recent focus being on a shared market system analysis and audit of available market information on onions. Although Australian research teams are unable to operate on the ground in Balochistan, some do already have some linkages with research teas there. Collaboration with AusABBA provides great opportunities to scale out Aik Saath project outcomes and this was explored at the Annual Meeting.

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ACIAR's Legacy in Pakistan

Agriculture Sector Linkages Programme (ASLP) linked to increased Mango Exports
ASLP included two mango projects - one focused on production issues such as disease control and nursery hygiene, while the other helped farmers to link to domestic and export markets more effectively. These approaches had many synergies of course, with many market access issues related to the need to certify orchards as meeting the standards of importing countries.

Outcomes included establishment of clean mango nurseries, improved orchard management practices such as pruning and irrigation, integrated management of field diseases and pests, postharvest management (temperature, packaging, disease control, sea freight & ripening protocols), capacity building for farmers and extension staff, identification/development of national and international markets.

The impact of this work is continuing as more farmers seek and qualify for export certification - even small growers can achieve this through linkages with larger packhouses. Exports are now approaching 100,000 tonnes and the Pakistan Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association reported that in 2018 “....It would be first time that Pakistani mango would be exported to China through CPEC route and around 500-2,000 tons are anticipated to be exported to China” with China expected to

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Notes for your Diary in 2019

- Global Pulse Day 18th January
- World Water Day 22nd March

The Aik Saath Water Management Skills project will organise a two-day event with day one being mostly for farmers to present their experiences and day two for presentations from water projects and others if people are keen to share how they are working with farmers and their families to bring change. Posters will be displayed both days so any of the teams can offer a poster of their work. Contact Sandra Heaney-Mustafa

- ACIAR Seeds of Change Conference in Canberra 2-4 April

The Aik Saath team is organising a Roundtable Session to address several important questions including how to bridge the language barrier between bio physical Scientists and social scientists. This will benefit from input from all project staff. Contact Gerard McEvilly, Aik Saath Coordinator.
https://www.canberra.edu.au/research/faculty-research-centres/aisc/seeds-of-change

- Gender equality through agricultural research for development
- Easter 19-22nd April
- Ramadan 27 May - 27 June approx
- Aik Saath Annual Meeting mid-year (tbc)

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