

Project Evaluation Series
[09/2021](#)

**Evaluation of the project
“Australia Balochistan Agribusiness
Programme Phase 2 (AusABBA II)”**

Project code: GCP/PAK/141/AUL

Follow-up report

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Evaluation recommendation	Management response Accepted, Partially accepted or Rejected	Management plan			
		Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection	Description of actions actually taken, or reasons for actions not taken	MAR Score	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions
<p>Recommendation 1.</p> <p>FAO and national partners should design and implement the next phase of the project, taking into consideration the need to ensure an enabling environment for continued and effective functioning of FMCs.</p> <p>Continuing AusABBA II-type interventions is highly desirable. The links between small farmers, new FMCs and markets need further strengthening and the FMCs themselves need reinforcement and, eventually, transformation into MMOs. It is recommended that FAO explore other opportunities to extend project activities for an additional three years, as originally anticipated. This agribusiness model could then become easy to assess, replicate and upscale by other development institutions as well.</p> <p>Building the capacity of farmers through farmer field schools has been very effective and it is recommended to use the approach in future FAO programmes, and to recommend its use to other development actors for replication.</p>	Accepted	<p>Noted. The recommendations are being implemented in at least four AusABBA districts (out of six) under the EU-funded GRASP project. The GRASP project activities were designed to continue the AusABBA production, value addition, market linkage and FMC/MMO cooperative work commenced under AusABBA. FFS is implemented in most FAO projects and is key implementation modality.</p>	<p>The Horticulture Advancement Activity (THAZA) emerged after a long term support from development partners like Australia and US Government since 2009. THAZA was initiated to complement and sustain the results of Balochistan Agriculture Project (BAP), United States Assistance to Balochistan Border Areas (US ABBA), and Australia Balochistan Agribusiness Programme (AusABBA).</p> <p>The European Union also supported the Government of Balochistan financially (April 2022) to implement The Revival of Balochistan Water Resources Programme (RBWRP) to improve income and food security in selected river basins through sustainable and equitable management of water and rangeland resources. FAO Outcomes include; i) transition to low water use agriculture and livestock farming systems; ii) profitable value chains for low water economy.</p>	Excellent	<p>While no follow-up phase was designed and implemented, another project funded by USAID (THAZA) was designed and implemented during the period 2018-22 which built on the experience of the AUSABBA project in Balochistan.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 2.</p> <p>Interventions that focus on income generation and food security should be better integrated with other programmes addressing community development needs.</p> <p>Efforts to establish agribusinesses and promote entrepreneurship among farmers with the aim to improve income and food security should be closely linked with social sector services such as education, health and hygiene, to support overall community development.</p> <p>It is recommended that an agribusiness model that emphasizes market systems development be implemented in other districts of Balochistan in collaboration with development agencies and donors. This should be integrated with community mobilization models being implemented by other development agencies in the province.</p>	Accepted	<p>The initial step (under phase I AusABBA) has been to develop Community Development Plan and Community Action plans. These plans encompassed the provision of social services (education, health, etc) which the communities have pursued directly through the linkages established by the project.</p> <p>In AusABBA and in GRASP (the project that grew from AusABBA) the project activities were designed to complement and extend government agriculture, livestock and gender activities. The Covid19 response activities in AusABBA targeted families identified using the government’s mother and child and nutrition and poverty status data. Efforts were made to coordinate the C19 response activities with other agencies, in particular WFP’s mother and child support, but programme areas did not overlap.</p> <p>For the most part, FAO was the only UN agency with presence and programming in the AusABBA districts.</p>	<p>In 2021 THAZA targets were revised towards higher value grants to complement the achieved results in AusABBA with a transitional strategy promoting agriculture value chains, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. increasing local production; ii. improving market structures; and iii. strengthening services. <p>The sales value went up more than double for some commodities.</p> <p>The project offered various opportunities for the value chain actors and fostered market dynamics and relationships between the different actors in the chain like local producers, traders /agro-dealers, Entrepreneurs, Farm Service Centers, Farmer Marketing Collectives (FMCs), M.S. Enterprises, etc.</p> <p>The GRASP EU-funded project which was designed on EU SUCCESS programme integrates community mobilization model, which complements PPAF and ITC actions.</p>	Advancing	THAZA and GRASP projects complemented the achievements of AusABBA adopting a market based value chain development approach.

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<p>Recommendation 3.</p> <p>The value chain-based agribusiness model needs further design improvements to enhance efficiency and ensure better outcomes.</p> <p>The evaluation team observed that the sustainability of the small farmers with small businesses depends on medium-size businesses, since these have better resources and strong linkages with the markets. Their linkages with each other will promote the survival of newly established business institutions in the province and will promote sustainable market systems development approaches. In this context, the success of FMC Kharan, which has brought together hundreds of small farmers for collective marketing, could be replicated in other districts of Balochistan.</p> <p>Water scarcity is a major challenge for agriculture across the province. The evaluation team recommends a strong focus on the water conservation and management through adoption of an integrated water resources management (IWRM) approach, the introduction of micro-irrigation systems, and the cultivation of low</p>	Partially accepted	<p>Water: FAO is very cognoscente of this matter and is leading the implementation of the IWRM approach in all horticulture and livestock programmes including this project AusABBA and the following GRASP project.</p> <p>Failure: Reject: there was neither a commodity failure or a project failure during the implementation of the AusABBA project. All commodities produced significant ROIs for farmers and FMC/MMOs and continue to be operated as successful agribusinesses. The economic impact of project activities was closely monitored during the life of the project and was reviewed every six months at LPC and annually at the AusABBA review meeting with the donor.</p> <p>FMC/MMO size: Agree that the larger the FMC/MMO the more likely it would be able to succeed under the difficult agribusiness conditions of southern Balochistan. This is something that was promoted during AusABBA and will also be continued during the GRASP project.</p> <p>Procurement: AusABBA has provided training to the local vendors in Balochistan to allow them to be registered on the UNGM system. This enabled local businesses to compete for the provision of inputs within AusABBA but also elsewhere</p>	<p>Growth for Rural advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP) EU-funded project in Sindh and Balochistan was designed and started in 2021 in partnership with International Trade Centre (ITC) and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation fund (PPAF). The project design learnt from the experience of AusABBA and has incorporated value chain approach that promotes agribusiness value chain and market development.</p> <p>The EU-funded RBWRP implements Output 2.3 that aims at Enhanced skills to adopt low-water-use horticulture techniques in targeted communities: here the farming households are trained and equipped to develop and implement water efficient agricultural practices in the selected watersheds/micro basins.</p> <p>In Outcome 3, Water Efficient and Profitable Agricultural Value Chains, the producers and service providers of selected value chain benefit from improved water efficiency, productivity, and economic returns.</p>	Advancing	<p>GRASP applied the value chain based agribusiness model.</p> <p>Water issues were incorporated in the EU funded water development project in Balochistan which started in 2021.</p>

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<p>delta-high commercial value crops in all future programmes.</p> <p>When using an agriproduct approach in future projects, a clear distinction should be made between project failure and commodity failure in drawing specific lessons. Project failure may result from lack of proper support, gaps in capacity building for farmers, institutional issues hindering the smooth functioning of FMCs and marketing issues; while commodity failure may result from the fact that the commodity is not suited to the local climate, low production and demand, low profitability, etc.</p> <p>Consistency in the application of the procurement for development model is needed to ensure the purchase of local inputs to build the local market system and promote market relationships. This model is an essential part of an effective value chain approach.</p> <p>There is a need to clarify the synergies between the IHFS approach and an inclusive market system development approach that enables women to lead profitable businesses and develop productive links with markets.</p>		<p>in the country. This work will be extended further with the introduction of procurement for development as a programme of work for the FAO Pakistan Procurement Unit.</p> <p>IHFS: The IHFS approach was a humanitarian response activity, which was designed to be further leveraged into an inclusive market systems approach with the addition of further training and input support. The IHFS concentrated on ensuring the food security, nutrition of families with pregnant and lactating women and children under five years of age, during the lockdown period associated with the government’s Covid19 response. Under the GRASP project these households and in particular the women will be targeted for further agribusiness support, which will include value addition and selling of surplus in the local markets. A FMC/MMO approach will be used in this addition inclusive market support.</p>			

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<p>Recommendation 4.</p> <p>Interventions targeting women have proved to be effective in addressing gender mainstreaming and economic empowerment. These should be replicated in all FAO projects.</p> <p>Gender empowerment through promoting women-led businesses and mainstreaming them in a market system was an effective approach of AusABBA II with great potential for replication elsewhere in the province. While it is important to develop the skills and confidence of women, it is crucial that they are empowered to conduct their own businesses.</p> <p>It is recommended that women and young people are central to all development interventions targeting agriculture, since a gender- and youth-balanced approach might be the recipe for more equitable agricultural and economic growth.</p> <p>The three most successful women's FMCs were dedicated to wool, poultry and seedlings. In the wool business, women were able to create efficiencies and to effectively market good products. With more training and inputs, these businesses have room to grow. In poultry, women were able to</p>	Accepted	<p>The comments are fully endorsed. The efficiencies gained will not only be replicated and scaled up under the GRASP project but in all other FAO investments in the province.</p>	<p>These project learnings already been part of GRASP design and upcoming other development project including emergency response.</p> <p>The new USAID-funded project in KP incorporates interventions targeting women and prioritize economic empowerment of women.</p>	Good	Both THAZA and GRASP has strong gender components

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<p>expand their businesses and increase their incomes. Like wool making, poultry raising can be scaled into a large level commercial business through future projects. Although only a small number of women were engaged in the seedling business, they were making high returns and</p> <p>had plans to expand, based on growing demand, especially by women buying seedlings for their kitchen gardens.</p> <p>It is recommended that FAO work with women’s FMCs and community organizations to create better branding and improve the packaging of products for greater marketability. In this regard, the GRASP project looks to scale and support women’s community organizations and FMCs by providing on business concepts, branding and group management to enable them to become registered and sustainable farmers’ groups.</p>					

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