Study Tour

Five technicians from strategic areas of the Pakistani agricultural sector (central and local administration, education, research and private sector) have completed a training course started on 13/09/2011, conducting practical and theoretical sessions with Italian agencies and institutions of Tuscany and Trentino Alto Adige and participating in trade fairs and events in agriculture.

Between September 19th and October 3rd 2011 at Fondazione Edmund Mach, Istituto Agronomico di San Michele all’Adige (IASMA) the Pakistani technicians have been able, through guided tours and lectures organized by the Centre for Technology Transfer of the Institute, to get in contact with a reality of excellence in the field of fruit growing and moreover in Trentino Alto Adige who has a territory and climate conditions similar to the one of the project area.

This moment of technical and cultural interaction is the first phase of an exchange program that will be accomplished in 2013 through the visit to the project areas of some selected Italian technicians.

Partners

Donor
- Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - General Directorate for Development

Institutional Counterparts
- Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Economic Affairs Division)

Agriculture, Livestock & Cooperative Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Implementing Partners
- Agriculture Extension Department (East)
- Agriculture Research Institute - Mingora (West)

Agricultural University of Peshawar

Study Tour Partner
- Fondazione Edmund Mach, Istituto Agronomico di San Michele all’Adige

Introduction

The Istituto Agronomico per l’Olivicoltura (IAO) is the “consultancy and technical assistance” organ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the field of agricultural science and technology.

The Institute is involved in development cooperation initiatives on integrated rural development, environmental and natural resource management, fight against desertification and food security.

IAO, in close consultation with the General Directorate for Development (DGCS), has developed an extensive network of contacts and collaborations with developing countries organizations and institutions, national and international governmental and non governmental organizations, research organizations in Italy and abroad. Mission: “To conceive and implement, on behalf of the Italian Development Cooperation, in partnership with local people, research, studies technical assistance and training initiatives with the aim of reducing hunger and poverty, developing and managing agricultural and environmental resources in a sustainable way”. Vision: “Create together with Developing Countries a common and sustainable future in a world without hunger and environmentally friendly”.

www.iao.florence.it

ADP SWAT - IAO/PAK

Agricultural Development Project SWAT - IAO / PAKISTAN

“Technical assistance and support to fruit & vegetable growers in the Swat Valley (Pakistan) for the improvement of production & marketing in the horticultural value chain.”

www.swatfruit.com
Initiative

“Technical assistance and support to fruit and vegetable growers in the Swat Valley (Pakistan) for the improvement of production and marketing in the horticultural value chain” is a project focused on the improvement of the socioeconomic and social life standards of the local population of the Swat Valley determined through the modernization of the horticultural value chain.

The main purpose of the initiative is to increase the income of small farmers supporting them all along the value chain, from production to post-harvest and reducing the post-harvest losses actually standing at 40% of the total produced.

The initiative is funded by the Italian Government and implemented by Istituto Agromonico per l’Omnemare (IAO) with the support of Pakistani governmental counterparts with an initial duration of 12 months extendable according to the needs.

The allocated budget is 1,350,000,000 euro.

Geography

The valley of Swat is famous for its scenic beauty, snow-capped peaks, countless waterfalls, and glaciers, water springs and prairies, streams and rivers, thick woods, glades and glens, natural parks, lakes and dark forests. It is truly blessed as the Switzerland of Asia.

The valley is situated in the North of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). It lies 34° 34' to 35° 50' North latitude and 72° 08' to 72° 50' East longitude being surrounded by high mountains and bounded by Chitral and Chaser districts in the North, Kohat and Shangri districts in the East, Buner district and Mohmand provided areas in the South and lower-air districts in the West.

Its altitude varies from 2,300 to 9,700 feet.

The total area of Swat is 3,373 square kilometers with a population of about 1,250,000.

The summer in Lower Swat Valley is short and moderate while it is cool and refreshing in the upper northern part. The hottest month is June with maximum and minimum temperature of 32°C and 16°C, respectively. The coldest month is January with maximum and minimum temperature of 11°C and -2°C, respectively. Winter season is long and extends from November to March, rain and snowfall occurs during this season. The rainfall precipitation is high in winter as compared to summer season. The highest rainfall of 2.6 mm was recorded during the month of March.

Farmer Services Centers

The main objective of the model is to provide facilities to the members who are sharing the management costs with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government through the application of the whole District.

Each FSC is divided in General and Executive bodies and a Management Committee.

Their role is very important under a development perspective because it helps to include the most vulnerable, to poverty and food insecurity, having the ability of the main stakeholders to actively participate in identifying, planning, and implementing actions.

The objective of the Project is to enhance the institutional structure of the FSC, providing a more accurate and effective system based on the model of Italian successful private farming associations and cooperatives.

These Organizations are the core of the beneficiary community the Project is supporting.

There are 5 superordinated FSCs in the Swat District and 26 of Subdivisional level (SHU) in Malakand, Buner, Khyber, Chitral, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It is a Private Public Partnership based organization where the private sector is represented by farmers older than 18 and nowadays more than 6,000 farmers are regularly registered as members and the public one by the Agriculture Extension Department of Swat and out of them more than 1,000 qualified as membership since the beginning of the Project.

GIS Study

The Agriculture University of Pakistan, under the Project mandate, has developed a geographic information system (GIS) of the Swat District that has covered the whole territory with more than 5,000 interviewed farming households.

Based on that precious contribution the IAO is developing, through a high professional and scientific information system of the District aiming to propose scientific fundamentals for the establishment of efficient policies.

Actually more than 50 maps have been drawn and local sampling, throughout the district, have been implemented aiming to verify new potential areas for cultivation and a better management of the existing ones.

Training

In a total comprehensive and participatory approach together with the beneficiaries representatives and the implementing agencies, the Project, has developed a training system based on two steps directly implemented by Agricultural University of Pakistan:

1. Preliminary Training Needs Assessment (TNA);
2. Training of Trainers (ToT).

Providing, necessary high value transfer of knowledge on agricultural topics to local professionals for a total of more than 50 technicians involved.

Later on the Project has delivered training to the beneficiaries through the Agriculture Extension Department of the Swat District and its new trained officers through two methods:

Traditional frontal activities: Providing 16 sessions for a total of more than 600 beneficiaries.

Farmer Field Schooling (FFS): Providing 12 sessions for a total of more than 750 beneficiaries who have experimented in the field what learnt during the classes.

Infrastructures and Rehabilitation

The Project is providing the establishment of two fruit and vegetables processing and grading plants in Matta and Khyber (FFP).

Each one of them will be equipped with a cold room for storing the production and sell off if more competitive prices in exit season, a mechanical line for the selection, washing, vacuuming, grading and packaging of the products, a biological power generator, a temperature controlled transportation truck.

All these practices will help the FSC to achieve a better standard of marketing reducing at the same time the post-harvest losses that actually are around 40% of the total production.

In addition the Project provided the rehabilitation of the FSC offices in Matta and Khyber (FFP) that have reported critical damages during the military operations of last 2009.

Machinery and Vehicles

With the main objective to reduce the post-harvest losses the Project is providing each of the 32 selected FSCs with the following items:

- Cold Rooms for fruit storage;
- Selection lines for washing, waxing, drying, brushing and selecting by weight and size of the fruit;
- Grading Machine (26 kg/meter);
- Controlled Temperature Carriers for fruit storage;
- Pick-up vehicles for the farms to plant utilization;
- Small mechanization units (mixers and stud).

The combination of those elements, together with a more accurate packaging policy, will take the farming community to have a better access to the local markets and a better return in terms of income.

Each of these continuous public electricity affecting the Swat Valley will be covered distributing three auxiliary generators (of 100 kW) and one unit which management costs will be covered, for the first year of operations, by the Project.