

# LEAD UPDATE

Project Inception Meeting  
**Pathways to Strengthening  
Capabilities for Climate Smart  
Agriculture in Pakistan – Khyber-  
Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan**  
March 05<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at Islamabad



## Background

Developing economies such as Pakistan, face multifaceted issues including: ever growing population, over-dependency on the agriculture sector, constrained financial resources with insufficient adaptation capacity and growing environmental challenges. Pakistan as an agrarian economy is acutely sensitive and vulnerable to climate change impacts. The country is 6th most populated, relatively large chunk of population is poor, with limited livelihood options. Being an agrarian economy, 25 million of the economically active men and women are depended on the agriculture especially in the rural communities. The adversities of changing climate are evident in form of frequent droughts, growing water scarcity, reduced crop yields, land degradation and livestock numbers that are risking livelihoods. Therefore, alternative livelihood options and adaptation methods are needed for that the concept of climate smart agriculture has been introduced.

Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) is the concept of adopting agricultural practices that help transform systems to effectively support the development and food security from the changing climate. The concept aims to address three main areas: sustainably increase agricultural production and incomes; adaption and resilience to climate change; and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. CSA can be applied through various strategies, hoping to fulfil global food demands and ensure food security all whilst implementing sustainable practices in the agriculture sector.

## Actions

Following the ever growing challenges in the country, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan province, LEAD Pakistan in

partnership with Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Directorate of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Balochistan, and UAP is implementing the project, “Pathways to Strengthening Capabilities for Climate Smart Agriculture in Pakistan – KP and Balochistan”. The project aims to build capacities of Agriculture Extension Officers/district agricultural officers (DAO’s). Under this unique opportunity, LEAD Pakistan is developing a CSA toolkit to deliver local knowledge on climate smart agriculture in local context and benefits of adopting climate smart technologies. Being the first hand beneficiaries, DAOs from respective provinces are expected to further disseminate knowledge and implement new learned strategies of climate smart agriculture through enhancing capacities of local farmers for sustainable agriculture production.

The inception meeting for Asia Pacific Network for Global Change Research funded project “Pathways to Strengthening Capabilities for Climate Smart Agriculture in Pakistan – KP and Balochistan (CBA2019-07SY-Khan)” took place on Thursday, 5th of March 2020. This meeting was the first phase of the project, in which members of all partner institutes, LEAD Pakistan, Pakistan Agriculture and Research Council (PARC), Department of Agriculture Balochistan and the University of Agriculture Peshawar, met to discuss the opportunities and challenges around the successful delivery of the project. As part of project’s activities, 02 cohorts of DAO’s from various areas of KP and Balochistan has been finalized that will be better educated on the subject.

## Reflection by Partners: Challenges and Opportunities

The inception meeting kicked off with

session one where Mr. Saqib Sultan (LEAD) welcomed and further briefed participating members by providing background of the project – participating institutions, donor's aim, and area of concern. He was accompanied with Mr. Zeeshan Virk (LEAD) who shared the context and rationale for the project. He briefly discussed that climate change is affecting global economies, where costs of climate repercussions are high; further, climate changes are severely affecting local economy and resources. It was pointed out that Pakistan is highly vulnerable to climate change and the effects are already being felt in the form of droughts and extreme temperatures. Mr. Virk stated that provinces like Balochistan and KP require vast amount of work in agriculture sector to be done in order to develop them to national and global standards. Similarly, pressures such as a growing population was highlighted that put food security under threat, whilst gaps in service delivery are prominent where improved practices will equip district agriculture officers with the right knowledge and tools to implement adaptation strategies.

Dr. Zakir Hussain, who chaired the session, emphasized the important role of partners in building capacities particularly the significance of PARC through resource mobilization and technical advisory support. Further, the second session followed with Dr. Haroon Khan (UAP) who elaborated on the matter; and described the resource limitations that KP as a province faces, suggesting it needs reforms within its systems to improve the province's socioeconomics. The agriculture sector of the province lacks adaptation milieu changing climate and current practices are inefficient as well as less yield producing. He emphasized on the lack of training and skills to deal with climate change and its induced threats. He reiterated that training is required, therefore, this project is the rare opportunity to

address these concerns.

The third session involved Dr. Arif Shah Kakar (DAE) thoughts and views on key challenges faced by the Balochistan province. He suggested that service delivery is of key importance thus should be labelled as a priority mandate for the project. He explained how limitations exist in understanding the issues, with the lack of knowledge and expertise in the field, occurring issues have and may further be overlooked. He later explained that thorough research is needed and that the validity of research should be questioned, for authenticity purposes. He reiterated that there are several gaps in the system at provincial level, pointing out lack of data, outdated policies and no implementation enforced, all of these need to be addressed. He further elaborated that although trainings were provided through existing institutes, the concept of climate change was not covered in those training modules, leaving officers uninformed and unprepared, indicating that it needed a careful revision of existing curricula. The inclusion of climate smart agriculture is essential and needed for Pakistan in order to adapt to the changing climate.

Prior to the commencement of the fourth session, a short roundtable discussion led by Dr. Bashir Ahmad (PARC) in which members of the audience further discussed why these two provinces needed the most attention and work. Upon the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Banaras Khan took forth and provided information of the work that FAO has completed in regard to climate smart agriculture. It was presented that FAO has initiated a Climate Smart Villages (CSV) program in countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries. The CSV model aimed to implement sustainable development methods in Pakistan and he affirmed the value of collaboration and mutual efforts. The time for climate change has already come, the time now is to

adapt.

The inception meeting concluded with the finalization of 02 cohorts from KP and Balochistan, based on nominations received from relevant Departments of Agriculture Extension. The criteria for selection was based on qualifications, experience; however, preference was given to the most affected regions based on cohort selection committee's recommendations. Selection aimed to choose officers who are from different regions of the provinces to maximize the project outreach. Based on this, ten agricultural officers were selected from each province with the help of committee.

Lastly, it is a unique opportunity for knowledge advancing on CSA and putting mutual efforts on building capacities to adapt to the changing climate to ensure the security of people and resources. At this point in time, climate change is linked to global economies, a drastic change in economic proceedings may have serious implications for a developing country. Therefore, Pakistan needs to implement and adopt adaptation strategies well in time to avoid such pressing impacts on the sector. Developing knowledge toolkits and disseminate resources on CSA through capacity building initiatives is one positive step that should be replicated in other areas to mitigate climate change and preserve our agriculture based economy.

#### List of Participants

- Arham Mustafa (LEAD)
- Banaras Khan (FAO)
- Dr. Arif Kakar (DAE Balochistan)
- Dr. Bashir Ahmad (PARC)
- Dr. Haroon Khan (UAP)
- Dr. Zakir Hussain Dahri (PARC)
- Durreshahwar Awan
- Muhammad Saqib Sultan (LEAD)
- Muneeb Ahmad Khan
- Syed Ahmed Hasan (LEAD)
- Zeeshan Virk (LEAD)