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Supporting Women-Led Agribusiness Development in Gilgit-Baltistan

PATTA's capacity-building support to its agribusiness partners is transforming agriculture in remote villages, unlocking private sector innovation, and encouraging women-led micro-enterprise development in Gilgit Baltistan region



An immense potential for agricultural productivity lies in mountainous Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), where 90 percent of the households are agricultural landowners. Horticulture and livestock-based smallholders' access to agricultural technologies and quality inputs is limited, resulting in post-harvest losses. In addition, innovative agribusinesses which manufacture new tools and products in other provinces lack ability to make new technologies available to farmers and dealers in GB due to several outreach-related constraints such as logistics, limited knowledge of business expansion, and lack of marketing and sales skills.

Solve Agri Pak (private) limited, a Punjab-based agribusiness company offering products and services in dairy and livestock sector, was unable to enter new geographical territories due to lack of access to local dealers and limited business expansion opportunities. Seeing the investment potential for agricultural technologies in GB, Solve Agri Pak's representatives realized how important it was to find a gateway to launch special products and commercialize best agricultural management practices in the GB region. In 2018, Solve Agri Pak partnered with the four-year USAID-funded Pakistan Agricultural Technology Transfer Activity (PATTA) to increase their capability to expand, leverage new investments, and match farmers' needs in GB area. Since then, PATTA has provided several investment opportunities to 37 agribusinesses including Solve Agri Pak and helped them in promoting their products in demonstrations, field days, expos and linkages building initiatives with local dealers and other key actors across Pakistan.

In June 2019, PATTA's support helped Solve Agri Pak to establish new business in GB, where the agribusiness opened its very first franchise called 'Darwaish and Sons'. Between June and September 2019, Solve Agri Pak introduced livestock products such as semen, feed, and minerals, investing approximately USD 3,070 in a new region. In addition, Solve Agri Pak's agricultural technologies sales amounted up to USD 9,803, as a result of PATTA's facilitation.

Ghulam Raza, owner of 'Darwaish and Sons', purchased 700 bags of cattle feed worth USD 8,215 from Solve Agri Pak in June 2019 and sold 581 bags worth USD 7334, earning profit of USD 515 within three months of opening the business franchise. "We are new in agriculture technology business. PATTA has not only helped us to develop our linkages with Solve Agri Pak but also assisted us in reaching local farmers in GB. We have also collaborated with women farmers and entrepreneurs," said Ghulam Raza.

“I would like to thank PATTa for providing me an opportunity to start my own agriculture-related business. It’s not only a business for me but a way to improve my lifestyle”

Fareeda Begum, woman farmer from village Oshikhandass, Gilgit-Baltistan

PATTa’s key agribusiness partners are providing business opportunities to women and extending support for their usage of agricultural technologies. Fareeda Begum, a 47 years-old woman farmer from village Oshikhandass, established a sub-dealership with ‘Darwaish and Sons’ when PATTa linked her with Solve Agri Pak. She sold 70 bags of cattle feed and promoted the products to other women farmers through PATTa-supported awareness-raising sessions. “PATTa is developing our linkages with different agricultural technology companies which is not only benefiting me as an entrepreneur but also advantageous for other women farmers of my village,” explained Fareeda Begum.

USAID PATTa will continue to create lucrative entrepreneurial opportunities for women by developing their linkages with agricultural technology businesses, so that agriculture is more vibrant and inclusive in GB. The project acknowledges women as change agents and is creating opportunities for their equal access to resources and facilitating business development linkages, so they are not left behind to benefit from agricultural business expansion. PATTa’s targeted assistance to agricultural technologies enterprises and women-led businesses, through an array of customized technical support will not only improve their competitiveness, but also support technology promotion and farmers’ adoption of innovative management practices.