

# PAKISTAN

## Strategy Support Program



Pakistan is at a crossroads today. The country's future growth and prosperity depend acutely on facing a number of complex issues. Many of these issues are grounded in the persistent challenges of reducing poverty, improving food security, and fostering broad-based economic growth throughout the country. Solutions will partly come from designing strategies, policies and investments that serve the millions of poor, rural households and food-insecure urban households. Only with a better understanding of how to implement, monitor, and improve these solutions will Pakistan's growth and poverty reduction objectives be achieved.



Photo: IDS

Responding to a request from the Government of Pakistan, the Pakistan Strategy Support Program (PSSP), launched in July 2011, is a flexible country-led and country-wide policy analysis and capacity strengthening program. The program provides analytical support on a range of economic policies affecting agricultural growth and food security in the country. The core purpose of the program is to contribute to pro-poor economic growth and enhanced food security through strengthened national capacity for designing and implementing evidence-based policy reforms. This requires improving research-based policy analysis; building capacity, leadership and networks among researchers and policy analysts within and outside the government; and disseminating research results among diverse stakeholders.

The PSSP, which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to create a more favorable enabling environment for investment and enterprise growth, particularly in the agricultural sector. It is being implemented through close collaboration between IFPRI, Innovative Development Strategies (Pvt) Ltd. (IDS), and other collaborators, under the guidance of a high-level National Advisory Committee.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

IFPRI draws from substantial experience in Pakistan, including a policy program that achieved significant national engagement in the mid-1980s to early 1990s, supported by USAID. Since that time, the institution has completed numerous research studies and training activities in Pakistan.

The expected outcomes of this new IFPRI initiative in Pakistan are:

1. Greater capacity among knowledge providers in the academic and policy research community to generate results that fill key knowledge gaps to impact the design and implementation of Pakistan's development strategy.
2. Greater capacity among policymakers, implementation agents and stakeholders to demand and absorb policy research in support of national, provincial, and local priorities.
3. A broader and more integrated knowledge community made up of researchers, policymakers, civil society, and the private sector, to support pro-poor policy dialogue and strategic priority setting.

## STRATEGIC POLICY RESEARCH AREAS

Approximately eight major projects will be underway during each year of the program, with new projects added as earlier ones are completed. The four initial focus areas of the PSSP are:

- Agricultural production and productivity
- Water management and irrigation
- Poverty reduction and social safety nets
- Macroeconomics, markets, and trade

Within these policy areas, PSSP research aims to increase the impact and sustainability of agricultural development and poverty reduction programs to positively impact national growth, employment and household incomes; evaluate the economic potential of biotechnology and articulate designs for a well-functioning biotechnology regulatory system; promote more efficient and sustainable management of canal and ground water resources; evaluate the dynamics of poverty reduction and assess the effectiveness of poverty-reducing safety net programs; reduce the fiscal cost of agricultural support programs; and foster competitive markets and international trade.

## NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The activities of the PSSP are guided by a National Advisory Committee (NAC) chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of Pakistan, along with representatives from the federal government, provincial governments, USAID, civil society, and the private sector. The NAC reviews and approves the agenda of the PSSP. Provincial advisory groups will ensure larger regional participation.

## COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The operational approach of the PSSP is based on collaboration between IFPRI and a wide range of Pakistani scholars. IFPRI and IDS will engage with researchers at Pakistan public research institutions, such as the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), the Applied Economic Research Center (AERC), and the Punjab Economic Research Institute (PERI), in collaborative research. A competitive research grants program will also be launched.

## CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND OUTREACH

PSSP capacity strengthening efforts include building networks, conducting workshops, and providing support for international graduate and post-graduate degree training for researchers and analysts from diverse Pakistani institutions. The program works through a network of universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Sindh, North Punjab, Central Punjab, and Southern Punjab to disseminate research results to stakeholders at the provincial level.

The PSSP is envisioned as the first part of a comprehensive Pakistan Policy, Science and Innovation Program that will foster better informed policy decisions and promote science and innovation in agriculture.

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