



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale

2024 | EVALUATION REPORT - Synthesis

IMPACT EVALUATION

“Program to fight poverty through rural development in the provinces of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and nearby areas” - Pakistan



AID 9313



PROJECT DATA

Name of the project	Program to fight poverty through rural development in the provinces of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and nearby areas.	
Project number	AID N. 9313	
Endorsment	MAE Directional Committee, July 14, 2009	
Starting date	January 31, 2012	
Actual starting date	September 13, 2013	
Expected duration	36 months	
Actual duration	8 years (closed on December 31, 2021)	
Channel	Bilateral	
Geographical area	Pakistan, Balochistan's provinces and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Northwest border areas, ex Fata and neighboring areas.	
Executors	MAECI-DGCS Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF)	
Sector coding OCSE-DAC	31120 Agricultural development; 31130 Agricultural land resources; 31140 Agricultural water resources; 31161 Food crop production; 31163 Livestock; 31166 Agricultural extension; 31194 Farmers' organizations	
Budget	A. Aid Credit	€ 40.000.000
	B. ODA grant	€ 2.700.000
	C. Expert fund	€ 258.000
	D. Local fund	€ 122.739
	TOTAL	€ 43.258.739

EVALUATION'S KEY DATA

CIG code	978545903A
Type of assessment	Final impact evaluation
Start date and end date of the assessment	September 7, 2023 – February 29, 2024
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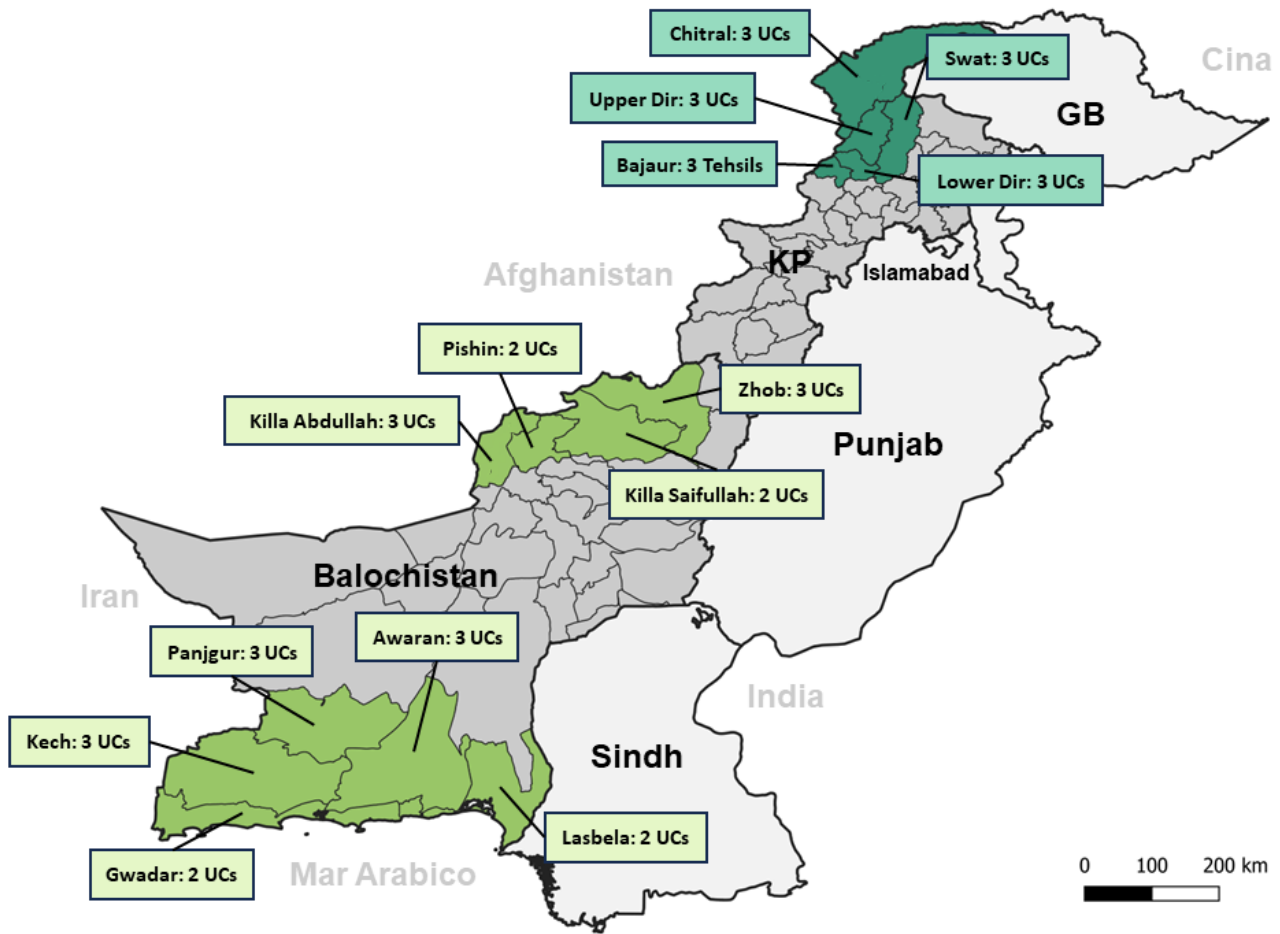
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The opinions expressed in this document represent the point of view of the evaluators and do not necessarily coincide with those of the client.

PROGRAM MAP



PPR'S IMPLEMENTATION DISTRICTS:

- BALUCHISTAN**
Zhub, Killa Saifullah, Killa Abdullah, Pishin, Gwadar, Lasbela, Awaran, Panjgur, Kech
- KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA**
Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Chitral, Swat, Bajaur

ACRONYMS

ADP	ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
AICS	ITALIAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
AKRSP	AGA KHAN RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM
ANC	ANTENATAL CARE
BRACE	BALOCHISTAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM
BRSP	BALOCHISTAN RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM
C&M	COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA
CDD	COMMUNITY DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT
CERD	CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
CI	COMMUNITY INSTITUTION
CLF	COMMUNITY LIVELIHOOD FUND
CO	COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION
CPI	COMMUNITY PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
CRP	COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS
DAC	DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE
DRR	DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
DGCS	GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
DPM	DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGMENT
EAD	ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DIVISION
EHN	EDUCATION, HEALTH AND NUTRITION
EQ	EVALUATION QUESTION
ESMF	ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
FAO	FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
FATA	FEDERALLY ADMINISTERED TRIBAL AREAS
FHH	FEMALE HOUSEHOLD
IMF	INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND
GRASP	GROWTH FOR RURAL ADVANCEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS
IPPF	INDIGENOUS PEOPLE PLANNING FRAMEWORK
ISM	IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT MISSIONS
ITC	INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER
KP	KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
LEP	LIVELIHOOD ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION
LSO	LOCAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATION
M&E	MONITORING AND EVALUATION
MAECI	MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
MEA	MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
MIS	MANAGMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS
MS	SOCIAL MOBILITATION
MTR	MID-TERM REVIEW

NIDA	NATIONAL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION PAKISTAN
NRM	NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
NRSP	NATIONAL RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM
OECD	ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
PASS	DIVISION OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND SOCIAL SAFETY
PNC	POSTNATAL CARE
PO	PARTNER ORGANIZATION
PPAF	PAKISTAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION FUND
PPR	PROGRAM FOR POVERTY REDUCTION
PRSP	POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPER
PSC	POVERTY SCORE CARD
RBF	RESUL BASED FRAMEWORK
RHC	RURAL HEALTH CENTER
RSP	RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM
RSPN	RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM NETWORK
SM	SOCIAL MOBILIZATION
SRSP	SARHAD RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM
UC	UNION COUNCIL
UCDP	UNION COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
UCI	ITALIAN COORDINATION OFFICE
VDP	VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
VO	VILLAGE ORGANIZATION
WB	WORLD BANK
WCI	WOMEN COMMUNITY INSTITUTION

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1 THE CONTEXT

Pakistan is one of the most densely populated countries in South Asia. Its strategic geographical position places it at the center of a region characterized by **continuous regional and international tensions**, due to the territorial dispute with India regarding Kashmir and the presence of jihadist groups along the border with Afghanistan. Pakistan is also subject to **frequent natural disasters**, which further aggravate the already complex socio-economic situation of the country. Furthermore, the strong post-pandemic recovery stalled in 2023, with large economic imbalances caused by a series of **internal and external economic shocks** such as, on the one hand, the devastating floods of 2022, import controls, political uncertainty, high inflation and, on the other, the increase in world raw material prices and global monetary tightening¹.

After a contraction of around 0.6% in fiscal year 2023, the World Bank confirmed that **GDP growth prospects** remain modest for fiscal year 2024 (1.7%)². This situation of economic insecurity and weak growth in particular increases the vulnerability of the poor population, putting at risk over 10 million people who live just above the poverty line. **Pakistan's poverty rate**, close to 40% in 2018³, shows no clear improvements in projections for 2023⁴, with most poverty concentrated in rural areas. The main causes include an inefficient land management model, low agricultural productivity, limited education, and low participation of women in paid work. The areas most affected are those bordering Afghanistan, in the most remote mountainous areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and in resource-poor areas such as Balochistan, southern Punjab and Sindh.

The government has implemented **several efforts to improve services and economic opportunities** for the rural population.

A key initiative, ongoing for over two decades, has been to **strengthen local representative bodies** with the aim of playing a planning and coordinating role in the implementation of development projects. However, although provincial governments have gained greater powers and resources following the 18th constitutional amendment in 2010⁵, decentralization at the district, village, and community levels remains limited. Furthermore, available funds are often controlled by the local elite, reducing their impact on beneficiaries, while the high turnover of high-level local officials limits interaction with communities.

A further development strategy involved **improving the governance structure of government departments**, with the aim of making them more participatory and responsive to the needs of the poor population in rural areas. However, despite some progress, government departments remain highly centralized and top-down, with agendas reflecting political returns and rent-seeking opportunities.

An approach with a long tradition in Pakistan involves **strengthening community institutions** (CIs), in order to mobilize local knowledge, skills, and resources, and act as an interface with decentralized government institutions. The main catalysts in this sense have been the Rural Support Programs (RSP). Thanks to their commitment, a series of methodologies, protocols, and good practices for community mobilization have been developed, and a standardized structure has been defined that includes a hierarchy on three levels: at the lowest level, the Community Organizations (COs), federated at the next level in Village Organizations (VOs), federated in turn into Local Support Organizations (LSOs), operating at Union Council (UC) level, which represents the lowest level of public administration. Community development actions have generally been successful in building

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pakistan/overview>

² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects>

³ Calculated on those with income less than \$3.65/day, measured in 2017

⁴ https://databankfiles.worldbank.org/public/ddpext_download/poverty/987B9C90-CB9F-4D93-AE8C-750588BF00QA/current/Global_POVEQ_PAK.pdf

⁵ https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1302138356_934.pdf

trust within local communities and channeling funds raised through various initiatives; however, they have been less successful in building relationships with key government departments and building links with the financial sector.

Finally, to address critical issues in the poverty reduction process, the government launched, from time to time, some "special initiatives" that were outside the purview of regular government departments. The **Pakistan Poverty Reduction Fund (PPAF)** was one of them. Registered as a non-profit company in 1997, it began operations in 2000, focusing in particular on providing microcredit and primary infrastructure at the local level and building the institutional capacity of organizations and communities. PPAF worked through its Partner Organizations (POs), benefiting from government funding and various donors, of which the largest was the World Bank. The Italian Cooperation has entered this dynamic, involving the PPAF as the implementing body of its Program for the Reduction of Poverty in Pakistan.

2 THE EVALUATION SCOPE

2.1 THE INITIATIVE

The “Program to fight poverty through rural development in the provinces of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)⁶ and surrounding areas” (hereinafter referred to as **PPR - Program for Poverty Reduction**) was achieved through the granting of an Aid Credit by the Italian government, fitting into the broader PPAF – III program of the World Bank, with a **total budget of 43,080,739 euros**, of which 40,000,000 euros as a credit and the remainder as a gift. Of the credit component, 95% went to finance field activities, while 5% constituted the “linked” portion for the procurement of Italian goods and services. The Agreement and the related Convention were officially signed in 2011. The PPR had an **effective duration of approximately 8 years**: started in September 2013 and originally planned to last three years, it counted on numerous extensions, concluding in December 2021.

The PPAF, as implementing entity, operated through 17 POs in 38 UCs of 14 Districts. The CIs represented the direct beneficiaries, through which **80,184 families were involved**, for a total of approximately 600 thousand indirect beneficiaries. The PPR targeted particularly vulnerable and under-served areas, characterized by huge pockets of extreme poverty of a multidimensional nature, security problems, lack of basic services and social marginalization, especially of women and youth. In order to alleviate the poverty of the target populations, creating sustainable conditions for development through the construction of a system of social and productive infrastructures and an effective social protection network, the initiative was developed through **five components**: 1) Social Mobilization (SM); 2) Protection and Livelihoods (LEP); 3) Construction and improvement of small-scale community infrastructure (CPI); 4) Establishment of basic health and education services (EHN); 5) Bonded component.

2.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

This evaluation carried out an analysis of the results achieved by the Program, in order to guarantee transparency and accountability as well as provide useful indications for improving the quality of future interventions and reorienting the strategies of Italian cooperation in the country. This analysis, conducted on the available documentation and through a field test, considered the standard **evaluation criteria adopted within the OECD/DAC**: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, sustainability, and impact.

The analysis focused above all on the last three criteria, analyzing, two years after its conclusion, the **impact of the initiative**, as well as its contribution to any structural changes in systems and regulations. Space was also given to a series of particularly relevant transversal themes and specific issues of interest for the MAECI/DGCS, listed in the Terms of Reference of the evaluation.

⁶Hereinafter referred to as ex-FATA, since starting from 28th of May 2018 they merged with the KP with the approval of the 31st amendment by Parliament which repealed the art. 247 of the Constitution.

3 THE THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 THE METHODOLOGICAL SYSTEM

The evaluation adopted a *Theory-based* approach to analyze how much the Program activities contributed to the expected change. To this end, the Program's Theory of Change was reconstructed, on which 10 evaluation questions were formulated, detailed in the **Evaluation Matrix**. The latter was fundamental in guiding the development of appropriate indicators, the preparation of tools to be used in the field, and the identification of techniques (quantitative and qualitative) for data collection and analysis.

3.2 THE DIFFERENT EVALUATION PHASES

The evaluation was **structured in three phases**: inception, data collection, drafting of the report.

The **first phase** took place in September/October 2023 and consisted of: preliminary meetings with the MAECI/DGCS Client, with the AICS headquarters in Islamabad and with the PPAF; collection and preliminary analysis of documentation; review of the proposed methodology and development of the analysis tools; redistribution of roles within the team following a change in composition; modification and development of the field mission plan, following the deterioration of the international context compromised by the events that occurred in the Middle East; drafting of the Inception Report.

The **second phase** took place between the months of October/December 2023, which included: an in-depth desk analysis; the administration of two surveys, addressed to POs and a sample of CIs; the carrying out of remote interviews with POs and various stakeholders by international staff; the implementation of visits to sample sites and interviews/focus groups with beneficiaries, POs, CIs and other privileged witnesses by local experts in the selected districts, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Based on the delays accumulated due to the previously mentioned change to the field mission plan, the extension of the overall duration of the evaluation to February 29, 2024, was requested and approved.

In the **final phase**, carried out between December/February 2024, the team finally prepared the Evaluation Report, following the overall analysis of the material collected, the triangulation of the data and the presentation and discussion of the results obtained. After the approval of the report, a workshop to present the Report is expected to be held in favor of Pakistani counterparts and stakeholders.

3.3 THE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS, AND THEIR LIMITS

The evaluation used both **qualitative and quantitative data**, employing different survey tools to diversify, triangulate and validate the information collected.

The **analysis of documents** relating to the implementation of the program provided a detailed overview of the intervention. In this sense, the monitoring system developed by the World Bank has certainly helped in providing a solid documentary basis. Specifically, the evaluation team considered: the basic documentation and executive agreements; 31 quarterly reports on program progress; the Mid-term Evaluation Report carried out by the APEX Consulting company in 2018 and the Final Evaluation Report carried out by the SEBCON company in 2021; the strategic and operational

guidance documents drawn up by the Pakistani Government and the PPAF for the management of the PPR; the thematic literature produced by international bodies, development agencies, public and private economic research bodies and other institutions operating in the sector. In particular, the Final Evaluation Report drawn up previously had already populated the result indicators proposed in the Logical Framework of the program. An attempt was therefore made to update these data, verifying their consistency through the relevant materials produced by the PPAF following the completion of the Program, qualitative information and direct observations.

The **tools used** were the following: online surveys, semi-structured interviews, direct observations, focus groups. As regards the online survey administered to the CIs, the sample used is statistically representative of the entire reference universe, allowing the generalization of the information collected. Specifically, a reasoned sampling was carried out, taking into consideration the types of institutions and their territorial distribution. The questionnaire administration method chosen was CAPI, considered most suitable for the target groups. For community institutions in Balochistan districts, 70% coverage was achieved, while for those in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 50%, but supported by direct visits from the team. Instead, the semi-structured interviews involved representatives of AICS in Islamabad, Pakistani institutions, officials of the PPAF, the World Bank and POs, other international donors, representatives of "tied quota" consultancies. The team adopted a participatory method, considering a variety of values and perspectives, responding to the interests of different stakeholders, and promoting collaborative relationships. Finally, site visits combined focus groups and direct observations to evaluate initiatives. The collaborative involvement of the POs facilitated the coordination of the visits, ensuring access to the project sites and the interception of the beneficiaries. During the discussions, we tried to ensure broad inclusiveness by actively involving people from different groups. In particular, the used methodology emphasized gender sensitivity, including women, and disaggregating the data by sex and age. Mixed group discussions were used whenever possible, promoting inclusive dialogue, otherwise separate discussions were conducted.

At the end of the collection phase, the information was classified and the answers for each DV were drawn up. The **analysis approach** followed the following steps: verified the quality of the information for accuracy, comparability, consistency, accessibility and completeness; systematization and creation of a database for quantitative data analysis; triangulation and Comparative Analysis.

4 EVALUATION RESULTS

The **main results of the evaluation** are listed below. For each evaluation question, a summary response is provided at the sub-question level.

4.1 RELEVANCE



Q.1 Do the strategy and activities of the program address the root causes of poverty in the assisted population?

Q.1.1 To what extent did the assisted population, local administrations and representatives of the institutions participate in the identification of the objectives and activities of the program?

The PPR has relied on a **Community-Driven Development (CDD) approach in its strategy as well as its implementation**. The target communities were identified in synergy with government actors and are relevant in terms of fighting poverty, as they are particularly vulnerable areas, characterized by low socio-economic indicators as well as situations of conflict and instability. The Program focused on social mobilization as the foundation for the implementation of all subsequent components, actively involving communities in all its phases, from the selection of beneficiaries and the identification of priority needs, to the planning and implementation of interventions. Inclusiveness and community participation were key elements, ensuring that activities were truly aligned with actual local needs and priorities.

Q.1.2 To what extent is the program strategy aligned with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals?

The analysis of the PPR strategy in the context of the main national and international policies shows how the Program is **fully aligned with them, contributing to the efforts of the international community and government actors in the development field**. Its integrated and holistic approach to poverty reduction, which combines income-generating activities with broader promotion of inclusion, equity, education, health and access to infrastructure resources, reflects the most recent guidelines on the matter, following the main programmatic documents of the sector (Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper).

Q.1.3 Which projects to be financed with any further contributions from Italian cooperation can originate from the components of the program?

The activities of Italian cooperation in Pakistan are already partly influenced by the PPR experience, which constituted an important testimony of Italian commitment and priorities in the country. Among the areas from which to learn, the **integrated approach model** certainly constitutes an element to be reproduced with adequate corrective measures to improve its efficiency. With reference to the individual components, however, the activities with greater possibilities of replicability and community interest concern the development of **production chains and the transfer of skills for sustainable small business schemes**. Furthermore, the theme of value chains represented a further example of good practices, in particular for olive oil and fishing, thanks to the approach aimed at involving communities and the sustainability of interventions.



Q.2 To what extent was the initiative's design able to adapt to the changing needs of the reference context?

Q.2.1 To what extent have the operations and needs of the projects carried out (in particular relating to the third component "Production Infrastructures") been the subject, and with what follow-ups, of a broader analysis in relation to the natural disasters that occurred in the country?

The initial design of the PPR envisaged the development of a **disaster preparedness and management strategy** as well as that all small infrastructures were built following a **resilient-oriented approach** towards natural disasters. The various evaluations and lastly the present observations have found discrepancies regarding the actual achievement of the objective. POs and CIs stated that the schemes were designed and implemented considering the potential disaster risks related to their area; the implementation plans of the initiatives have indeed been revised to meet the emergency needs of the communities, but on the other hand the 2021 Final Assessment Report highlighted that no structure, with the exception of flood protection walls, is resistant to natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and river overflows.

Q.2.2 What solutions have been adopted to reduce the effects produced by the COVID-19 pandemic on the socio-economic development of the assisted population?

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the risk management measures associated with it, important revisions were adopted to effectively align the strategy and implementation of the PPR to the new scenarios and needs that emerged in the 17 UCs where activities were still in progress. These changes took the form of a **real response strategy to COVID-19** and demonstrated the flexibility of the Program in responding to the changing needs of the reference context, highlighting a strong ability to adapt within all the main components of the initiative.

4.2 COHERENCE



Q.3 To what extent is the program integrated with the actions of the cooperation actors involved in the socio-economic development of the country?

Q.3.1 To what extent has the program been designed in a coherent and well-structured manner, with particular reference to the identification of objectives, activities and expected results?

The PPR presents a **solid internal coherence**, in which the intervention logic of the Program appears well structured, clear and transparent, as well as respected by all the actors involved, during its entire implementation period. Although the Final Evaluation Report raised some doubts regarding the effective integration of the different Components and the adaptation of the activities based on the needs of the communities involved, no further evidence emerges in this regard from this analysis. On the contrary, the complementarity of the interventions and their responsiveness to local needs are identified as the main strengths of the Program.

Q.3.2 To what extent was the program consistent with: a. other Italian cooperation initiatives in the country/globally? b. other similar interventions in Pakistan by the government or other donors?

As regards its external coherence, the PPR appears to **integrate harmoniously with the other Italian cooperation initiatives**, respecting their main orientations and key sectors of intervention. The comparison between the Program and other socio-economic development interventions in Pakistan also shows its alignment with national and subnational policies in the sector as well as its synergy with the initiatives of other cooperation actors in the country.

Q.3.3 To what extent has the program contributed to the definition or promotion of intervention strategies: a. of Italian Cooperation in the country? b. of other donors?

From the analyzes conducted, it emerges that the PPR seems to have left a significant imprint in the context of development initiatives in Pakistan, becoming a **reference model for similar interventions** financed by other donors. Its holistic approach, the strong emphasis placed on the sustainability of projects over time and the implementation strategy based on Development Plans are considered as a real paradigm shift for the community-led development approach in areas involved.

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS



Q.4 To what extent have the results envisaged by the program been achieved?

Q.4.1 To what extent have the different components of the program achieved results according to the original planning?

The PPR **overall exceeded the objectives established in the Results-based Framework (RBF)** for each component, recording an average rate of achievement of the result indicators of 130%. The analyzes conducted allow us to confirm the conclusions of the previous monitoring and evaluation activities of the PPR in this regard: the testimonies collected during the field investigations indicate a general satisfaction on the part of all the actors involved, while the quantitative analyzes verified the reliability of the results reported in the Project Completion Report, in turn obtained through the triangulation of data from different sources. In this regard, it should be noted that, although a detailed investigation like that of the baseline study was not conducted, the robustness of the results and their statistical significance appear to be guaranteed.

Q.4.2 To what extent and with what reliability have the M&E activities ensured learning and acquired evidence of the program's results?

The PPR M&E system, which has accompanied the Program since its inception, is based on a **robust M&E Framework**, initially developed in consultation with the World Bank and subsequently revised under the program's Tied Quota. As a whole, it appears particularly vast and complex, providing for a plurality of different roles, products and procedures which are at times excessively articulated, which **generate some methodological critical issues**, such as the presence of non-SMART indicators, the lack of local secondary data for the triangulation of results, the complexity of the survey tools and the excessive volume of data produced.

4.4 EFFICIENCY



Q.5 To what extent did the program's management and steering bodies allow for optimal execution of the planned activities?

Q.5.1 To what extent did the management bodies (in particular the Italian on-site coordination office) effectively guide the implementation of the activities?

The program, structured through integrated components and distributed over a large geographical area, involved numerous subjects, including institutional actors, the PPAF as implementing body, the Italian Coordination Office (UCI) in Pakistan and the World Bank. The Italian Coordination Office had the role of ensuring strategic coordination and participated in the main operational decisions.

Despite some rigidities in execution, **the overall management mechanism is considered adequate for the needs of the project.**

Q.5.2 To what extent did the management and technical capabilities of the Partner Organizations collaborate in the planning and execution of the activities?

The Partner Organizations (POs) have demonstrated **good organizational capacity and availability of adequate technical means.** The most critical aspect was the ability to tackle an integrated program with different components and the need to have diversified specialist skills.

Q.5.3 To what extent has the information produced by the monitoring and evaluation system served to guide the strategic and operational choices of the Program?

The program used a **complex monitoring and evaluation system**, through a dedicated PPAF Monitoring Unit and biannual visits carried out by the World Bank. The information produced by this system influenced strategic choices in real time, allowing adjustments and adaptations to be made according to identified needs.

Q.5.4 What measures have been implemented to overcome the obstacles encountered during the execution of the activities?

No significant problems or obstacles appear to have been encountered during the execution of the activities. Obviously, the long duration of the program may have generated difficulties, but they were adequately addressed. The main challenges concerned administrative, social and contingent issues, but the **ability of the actors involved to manage the problems**, once again leveraging the involvement of the communities, was confirmed.



Q.6 To what extent have the available resources been mobilized in a timely manner and aimed at carrying out the planned activities?

Q.6.1 To what extent were the project activities carried out in accordance with the original plan?

Project activities were carried out **largely in accordance with the original plan**, with limited modifications and effective management. Unforeseen events such as environmental issues and the COVID-19 pandemic have required adaptations but have not prevented the achievement of expected results.

Q.6.2 Has the financial and administrative management of the program contributed to the efficient mobilization of available resources?

The program was financed through **subsequent disbursements regulated by a financial agreement.** Despite some rigidities in financial and administrative management which caused delays, the PPAF applied well-established and appropriate management methods. Some partner organizations contributed their own resources to meet the timing of the commitments made.

Q.6.3 To what extent has the multisectoral approach adopted by the program envisaged and benefited from integrated management, from a territorial perspective of strengthening institutions?

The multisectoral approach adopted by the program has made it possible to **effectively address the challenges linked to poverty**, integrating interventions across sectors and territories and strengthening institutional capacities. The implementation of multi-sectoral activities has favored

larger and more structured organizations, highlighting the need for planning that is attentive to the specific needs of the territories. The program also contributed to **institutional strengthening at the local level**, increasing the participation and responsibility of community institutions in decisions and initiatives, a key factor in ensuring lasting results beyond the end of the Program.

4.5 IMPACT



Q.7 Do the socio-economic, cultural and environmental effects obtained from the program contribute to the reduction of poverty and the improvement of the living conditions of the populations involved?

Q.7.1 What are the main changes in socio-economic development processes generated by the program's support to grassroots and federative organizations?

The program has **strengthened local skills and improved community governance**, with a significant increase in family participation in community institutions and the participatory development of village development plans. These plans have positively influenced the development policies of the Union Councils (UCs), promoting democratic decision-making and responsiveness to the needs of the most disadvantaged communities.

Q.7.2 To what extent have the income and access to social protection networks of the poorest sections of the population increased?

The program has led to an **increase in income of 32%** for over 40% of the beneficiary population, **with improved access to social security mechanisms**. These results were obtained thanks to the fact that the interventions were mainly aimed at the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population, profitably using the Poverty Score Card methodology.

Q.7.3 To what extent has the creation of productive infrastructures in the area strengthened and diversified the means of subsistence and productive activities of the assisted population?

Building and improving community physical infrastructure has **boosted the local economy and job market**, improving access to markets and supporting small business. This has created new job opportunities and contributed to economic diversification.

Q.7.4 To what extent has access to health and educational services reduced the social vulnerability of the assisted population and contributed to their active participation in local economic development?

The program has **improved access to health and educational services**, reducing social vulnerability and contributing to active participation in local economic development. Access to education and health services showed a positive trend, reflecting a favorable impact on the reduction of poverty and social vulnerability.

Q.7.5 To what extent has the Program contributed to structural changes in social, cultural and institutional systems and norms?

The PPR strengthened local organizations, many of which are still operational today, facilitating social mobilization and institutional strengthening. The program also intervened in promoting changes in behavior and social roles, particularly encouraging the participation of women and young

people in decision-making processes, highlighting a positive impact on gender awareness and the expansion of development opportunities. Finally, the valorization of traditional cultural heritage was promoted, also for the purposes of economic diversification, as demonstrated by the initiative on textile craftsmanship in the Chitral district.

4.6 SUSTAINABILITY



Q.8 What is the level of local ownership of the results obtained and their continuation at the end of the program activities?

Q.8.1 What strategies and actions have been put in place to promote program sustainability, expansion and replication of local solutions, knowledge and capabilities?

As part of the PPR, the PPAF developed a **Sustainability Plan** which outlined the various strategies and actions to be implemented to promote the sustainability of the Program. First of all, it involved the training of some members of the communities, mostly young people, called **Community Resource Persons** (CRP), of which over 70% still carry out their role. The program also promoted the creation of **community federation networks**, for each of the three levels of aggregation, which made it possible to mobilize the resources of other stakeholders, donors and the government. To contribute to financial sustainability, the program finally activated a **specific fund at community level** to facilitate access to additional financial sources but the initiative was not widely disseminated. A still crucial support role is played by the **Partner Organizations**, of which approximately 70% are still operational in the same districts, and over 65% continue to assist the community institutions activated by the program.

Q.8.2 What were the factors – including the political, regulatory and macro-economic context – that determined or not the local ownership of the program results and the mobilization of resources by the beneficiaries?

Despite the unfavorable political and economic context and the impacts of natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, the program recorded a **high degree of satisfaction and involvement of beneficiaries**. Community participation was key, facilitating decentralized management and improving cost-effectiveness. Despite regulatory obstacles, effective monitoring helped overcome challenges and refocus activities based on development priorities, with support from the World Bank and the AICS office in Islamabad.

Q.8.3 To what extent has the use of the 5% linked share contributed to the sustainability of the actions carried out under the Program?

The Italian side, through the action carried out by the AICS office in Pakistan, **has certainly taken steps to direct the program towards sustainability**. The tied portion was used to offer technical assistance, consultancy and goods mainly in the areas of defining strategic plans, providing training and increasing the visibility of results. In particular, the capacity building part constituted the largest share of the interventions carried out and played a significant role, involving universities and research centers in Italy and Pakistan. Overall, the use of the tied quota has received appreciation from stakeholders for its contribution to the overall sustainability of the program.

4.7 VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION



Q.9 To what extent have the communication actions contributed to promoting local participation in the program activities and knowledge of the role of Italian Cooperation?

Q.9.1 To what extent and in what way have communication and knowledge management actions influenced the effectiveness of the initiatives and the amplification of their positive impacts?

Throughout the implementation of the PPR, activities carried out under the Program's communication and documentation strategy **have played a crucial role in ensuring its visibility across a variety of media**, significantly contributing to promoting community participation target and to amplify its effectiveness and positive impact. Despite this, two years after the closure of the initiative, the online visibility of the multimedia contents is limited, suggesting the need for more incisive promotion of the same to continue to maximize their impact through the dissemination of the results among a wider audience of stakeholders.

Q.9.2 To what extent has the visibility of Italian cooperation been ensured in the assisted communities and regions?

The visibility of Italian cooperation at a local level appears to be **not entirely consistent and subject to conflicting interpretations**. Although the Partner Organizations and Community Institutions involved declare widespread awareness among beneficiaries, the evidence provided by testimonies collected from other stakeholders and photographic evidence suggests that this awareness may not be uniform among the local communities assisted.

4.8 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES



Q.10 What was the contribution of the incorporation of cross-cutting issues in the execution of the activities and in the results obtained from the Program?

Q.10.1 To what extent has the promotion of an approach based on human rights contributed to broadening the ownership of the strategy and the benefits produced by the program by the weakest sections of the population?

PPR is based on an integrated and holistic approach that promotes active participation and ownership of interventions by target communities. In this context, the social mobilization component constitutes a central element, aiming at the empowerment of beneficiaries to improve their access to income, livelihoods, opportunities and services. From the investigations carried out, the Program appears to have also been successful in including the most vulnerable segments, promoting **equal participation** in all its components and ensuring a **democratic decision-making process** in the execution of its activities. This bottom-up approach was of fundamental importance in raising awareness among beneficiaries and helping to promote their broader and more widespread participation.

Q.10.2 To what extent have the program activities mobilized the contribution of women, youth and other marginalized groups in the governance of community development and enabled them to benefit from the program results?

Since its inception, the PPR has been strongly committed to **promoting the inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of communities** (women, young people, elderly people, people with disabilities, indigenous groups and the extremely poor) within the development process, providing the adoption of transversal strategies and the development of specific indicators and result targets. In this regard, it is possible to state that the Program has played an essential role in promoting the inclusion, empowerment and active participation of these groups in community life and decision-making processes, generating transformative change with particular regard to young people., extremely poor people and women.

Q.10.3 What appropriate and resilient environmental practices have been promoted by the program that contribute to the conservation of natural resources and production flexibility in relation to the impact of climate change?

During the implementation of the PPR, **several practices addressing sustainability were adopted**. In this regard, the guiding element was the ESMF, which oriented the environmental and social evaluation of the Program activities, trying to avoid negative impacts and incorporating, where necessary, mitigation measures. Several training sessions have been planned for the staff involved as well as specific internal and third-party audits to monitor compliance with the ESMF by POs and CIs and provide any recommendations. The PPR has also significantly contributed to the promotion of environmental practices aimed at the conservation of natural resources and resilience to climate change within communities, through the implementation of specific activities aimed at the population.

5 CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 1. The PPR strategy is fully aligned** with the main national and international policies, contributing to the efforts of the international community and government actors in promoting development and fighting poverty. The PPR has adopted an integrated and holistic approach to poverty reduction, combining income-generating activities with the promotion of inclusion, equity, education, health and access to infrastructure resources, in line with the orientations of main programmatic documents of the sector. Furthermore, it was based in its implementation on the community-driven development (CDD) approach, actively involving them in all phases of the program to ensure effective alignment with local needs and priorities.
- In response to **natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic**, the PPR has undergone revisions in its implementation, to realign the strategy and implementation to the new scenarios and needs that have emerged, demonstrating flexibility and ability to adapt. The implementation of small community infrastructures does not appear to have always been resilient to the emergence of new critical issues.
- The program presents a **solid internal coherence**, with a well-structured, clear and transparent intervention logic, respected by all the actors involved during implementation, despite some doubts raised about the effective integration of the different components. The **complementarity of the interventions** and their responsiveness to local needs have been identified as strong points of the Program. In terms of external coherence, the PPR seems to integrate harmoniously with other Italian cooperation initiatives and align with national and subnational policies in Pakistan, becoming a reference model for similar interventions financed by other donors.
- The PPR overall exceeded the objectives established in the Results Framework (RBF)**, recording an average rate of achievement of the result indicators of 130%. This evaluation confirmed the **general approval** of all the actors involved and the robustness of the analysis underlying the results reported in the closing report, carried out through the triangulation of data from different sources. However, the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system of the PPR has not been fully developed since the beginning of the Program, and presents some critical methodological issues, such as the presence of indicators that are not easily readable and the complexity of the detection tools adopted.
- Despite some rigidity in execution, **the overall management mechanism is considered adequate** for the needs of the project. The PPAF has a consolidated and effective management structure, despite some rigidities in financial and administrative management; the Partner Organizations have demonstrated good organizational capacity and availability of adequate technical means. The most critical aspect is related to the need to tackle an integrated program with different components and to have diversified specialist skills.
- The multisectoral approach** adopted has made it possible to effectively address the challenges linked to poverty, even if it has highlighted the need for planning that is attentive to the specific needs of the territories. Furthermore, the program contributed to institutional strengthening at the local level, increasing the participation and responsibility of community institutions in decisions and initiatives, which is essential to ensure lasting results beyond the end of the Program.
- The program has had a significant impact on reducing poverty and social vulnerability**, confirmed two years after its completion. It has increased the participation of families in Community institutions, positively influencing development policies at territorial level. Furthermore, it has led to an increase in income for more than 40% of the beneficiary population

and improved access to social security mechanisms. Building and improving community physical infrastructure has boosted the local economy and job market, creating new job opportunities and supporting economic diversification. Finally, it has improved access to health and education services, reducing social vulnerability and contributing to local economic development.

8. The program had a **high level of ownership** and satisfaction on the part of the beneficiaries, thanks above all to the training of specialized human resources, the Community Resource Persons (CRP) and the creation of community federation networks. The support of the program's Partner Organizations remains crucial to ensure sustainability, as approximately 70% of them are still active in the districts where the program was executed and over 65% continue to assist the community institutions activated by the program.
9. The program had **success in including the most vulnerable segments**, promoting equal participation and democratic decision-making. It is committed to promoting the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as women, young people, the elderly, people with disabilities and extremely poor people. During implementation, measures were taken to assess environmental and social impacts and promote resilience to climate change within communities.

5.2 LESSONS LEARNED

From the testimonies collected, it emerged that the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Program in Pakistan has left a significant mark in the context of development initiatives, offering a model towards which numerous donors have turned.

The most important of the main lessons learned is the proven value of **its integrated and holistic approach**, which has made it possible to jointly address various profoundly interconnected social, economic and cultural issues, resulting in alignment with the major international directions in the fight against poverty and the context of national development policies. The attention to maintaining the multidimensionality of the interventions, and the **involvement of communities** in the development and decision-making process, transferring to them the skills to plan, manage and implement the interventions, were the strengths of the PPR and the most successful practices.

In terms of efficiency, an aspect to underline concerns the **reliability of the executors**. The management mechanism relied on the PPAF's experience in implementing complex programs and on the territorial roots of the Partner Organizations. These provided them with solid organizational capital, which could be used in further initiatives by the donor community. The presence of recognized and competent subjects has made it possible to overcome the difficulties linked to the different contexts, successfully implementing interventions at a local level, guaranteeing social mobilization, the construction and maintenance of infrastructures and the supply of assets.

Among the various initiatives, the **development of production chains** has emerged as a good practice and an element of design innovation. The program supported the development and management of production chains (particularly olive oil), as well as the transfer of skills and expertise for sustainable small business schemes. The activities were focused on improving supply chains and the diffusion of specialized crops, contributing to the improvement of living conditions and the strengthening of livelihoods.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The program constitutes a success story, therefore the recommendations that follow aim to highlight some aspects susceptible to improvement, which in any case do not intend to invalidate the overall positive judgment obtained from the evaluation.

1. The involvement of government counterparts was ensured through their participation in the Board of the implementing body PPAF. The formal counterpart of the program, the Ministry of Finance

took care of the administration of the financial transfers, while the Ministry of Economy contributed to the checks on the effectiveness of the interventions, taking into account that the Pakistani Government assumed the burden of the credit received, distributed to the beneficiaries as a "donated" contribution. On the other hand, one is recommended **stronger dialogue with public administrations at local level, to increase ownership and sustainability of interventions.**

2. The procedure for identifying and selecting the executive counterparts was transparent and detailed, but responds more to general criteria than to the verification of actual skills in the area. As important as it is to measure an operator's characteristics, it is necessary **establish parameters that qualify their specific technical capabilities and integration with local communities.**
3. The program has deployed important resources, demonstrating the value attributed to it by the Italian Government. **It is therefore necessary that the results are capitalized in the best possible way**, and that they are disseminated effectively throughout the country and beyond, to guarantee a leverage effect and increase the impact generated. Since this is a specific interest of Italy, the resources allocated to the visibility and dissemination of the results should be managed directly by our offices, or at least the products of this activity should be subject to control over their actual use.
4. The integrated project is enhanced based on the added value given by the integration of its components. The PPR has adopted an effective scheme, but which in some cases has been applied rigidly, and with limited attention to the specifics of the context. Although it was the strong point of the program, the **responsiveness to the actual needs of the communities must always be considered as the first criterion in operational choices.**
5. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system of the PPR was very complex and elaborate. Borrowed from previous PPAF experiences, it has been revised and adapted well beyond the inception of the Program. In an intervention of this magnitude, this has negative effects, as it generates behaviors that are difficult to change. It is recommended to **develop the M&E framework in the initial phase and keep it operational through a few indicators that are easy to identify and collect.** It is also recommended to provide adequate allocations for the M&E activity, in order to be able to carry out a check upstream and downstream of the program of the starting conditions (baseline) and final conditions, to highlight the impacts generated.
6. There is a need for accountability in projects of this importance that should not be underestimated. The documentation supporting the role of the Italian party in supervising and verifying the choices of the implementing entities remains very sparse. For a program of this length and volume it is necessary **document the various characterizing steps with greater care**, rather than leaving the task of witnessing the process to the memory of the staff alone.
7. With respect to the executive methods, as sometimes happens, there are critical issues in the administrative and financial management. While this is largely not the responsibility of the donor, it would be helpful **agree with the executor on the defined administrative management methods, favoring flexibility and transparency.** The control intervention should not be focused on the ex-post phase, but should focus on the instruction of the procedures and their actual compliance with the timing of the intervention.
8. A component that has only marginally been included in the PPR concerns a form of financial support, such as micro-credit. Since this is an integrated project, the importance that financial viability and access to credit have for the overall success of the initiatives cannot be overlooked. **Envisaging a more robust presence of the micro-credit component within the framework of integrated initiatives** would constitute a non-negligible element in favor of greater sustainability.

سمری شیٹ

خلع تحصیل:	صومالیہ	تحصیل:	دلاھریہ
پوسٹ آفس:	محلوہ	مشیخ کوڈ:	
گاؤں:	انڈینڈی	نام تنظیم:	
تنظیم کی قیام:	انڈینڈی	کلیں سہران:	
بینک اکاؤنٹ نمبر:		بینک:	HBL Kota
نام صدر:	صدیقہ	نام سکری:	متھکلیہ
دولت:	انڈینڈی	دولت:	انڈینڈی
فون نمبر:	0346-9849057	فون نمبر:	03469849057

انڈینڈی گاؤں کا نقشہ

The map shows a village layout with several buildings and landmarks labeled in Urdu. Key locations include: 'محلہ' (Mohalla), 'محلہ بازار مسجد' (Mohalla Bazaar Masjid), 'محلہ بازار' (Mohalla Bazaar), 'محلہ انڈینڈی' (Mohalla Indianndi), 'محلہ سہران' (Mohalla Sهران), 'محلہ کلاں' (Mohalla Kalaan), 'محلہ کلاں بازار' (Mohalla Kalaan Bazaar), 'محلہ کلاں مسجد' (Mohalla Kalaan Masjid), 'محلہ کلاں بازار مسجد' (Mohalla Kalaan Bazaar Masjid), 'محلہ کلاں بازار مسجد' (Mohalla Kalaan Bazaar Masjid), 'محلہ کلاں بازار مسجد' (Mohalla Kalaan Bazaar Masjid).

