Efforts to strengthen Small and Medium Enterprises in Pakistan underway

Islamabad, 3 October 2019—Around 80 participants from the government, research and academia, development partners and public and private institutions and organizations gathered in Islamabad for the first round of multi-stakeholder consultations on efforts to reduce poverty in Pakistan. Under the initiative known as Growth for Rural Advancement and Sustainable Progress (GRASP), small and medium enterprises in Sindh and Baluchistan associated with livestock, dairy and horticulture will be strengthened over the next 5.5 years.

This project is funded by European Union in Pakistan and is implemented by International Trade Centre (ITC).

The discussions focussed on the identification of priority products in the horticulture, livestock and dairy sectors. In addition, key issues such as producers’ capabilities, support services, policy and regulatory environment were also determined.

Mr Abdul Razak Dawood Advisor for Commerce, Textile, Industries, Production and Investment said: ‘Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make up the bulk of businesses in Pakistan. In order to achieve coherent, broad-based and sustainable economic growth, there is a need to focus on SMEs and unlock the potential in livestock and horticulture besides other sectors in the country and GRASP comes at the most appropriate time when Pakistan is geared toward improvement in these sectors.

Mr Milko Van Gool Head of Cooperation, EU in Pakistan said `GRASP aligns with the rural development and economic cooperation initiatives of the
European Union in Pakistan as it will help SMEs in horticulture, livestock and dairy sectors become more competitive by making improvements at all levels of the value chains. These consultations will help us adapt to the federal and provincial context in Pakistan for maximum impact on the lives of people in Sindh and Balochistan.

Robert Skidmore, Chief, Sector and Enterprise Competitiveness International Trade Centre speaking about the consultations in Karachi, Quetta and Islamabad said the contributions of partners in this first round of consultations would help us in achieving a measurable reduction in poverty and increase in economic growth in addition to creation of more job opportunities in the country.

Livestock, dairy and horticulture – which account for 70% of value-added agriculture – have particularly strong potential for growth, climate adaptation and increased participation of women. Small and medium-sized enterprises in these two sectors, face major challenges.

Olivier Marty Lead Inception Phase ITC and Owais Khan representative of ITC in Pakistan were also present. Similar discussions were also held at the multi-stakeholder consultations in Karachi and Quetta attended by representatives of provincial governments of Sindh and Balochistan.

GRASP will help small and medium-sized enterprises in horticulture and livestock become more competitive by making improvements at all levels of the value chain. The nine month inception phase of the project began in June 2019.

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