

CEPC Green Corridor focuses on agricultural environment and food security

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China-Pakistan Green Corridor (CPGC) in the year 2022 recorded growth of 4.4 per cent, a target was decided at 3.5 per cent. In 2021 growth was recorded at 3.48 per cent. China-Pakistan agricultural cooperation has deepened in 2022 and has reached \$730 million with a year-on-year increase of 28.59 per cent. Export under the project is expected to reach \$1 billion in 2023.

In 2023, CEPC Green Corridor is focusing on improving land cultivation area, water management and better access to seeds, fertilisers, farm mechanisation, credit, irrigation and improvement in infrastructure and cold storage facilities.

CEPC Green Corridor focuses on the agricultural environment and food security and speaks volumes about the significance of agricultural cooperation in CPEC.

China and Pakistan have decided to promote modern agricultural cooperation. Both countries have recently signed a framework agreement on Belt and Road agriculture cooperation. The framework was signed at the China-Pakistan Symposium held at Northwest A&F University, China recently.

The agreement was signed by the Northwest A&F University, China National Machinery Industry Corporation (SINOMACH), and the Office of Foreign Affairs Commission, Shaanxi Provincial Party Committee.

According to the agreement, the three sides will work together under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), for promoting international agriculture technology cooperation, training in agriculture, building overseas agriculture parks and enhancing the agriculture industrial chain of BRI countries.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor was launched in 2013, the corridor links Pakistan's Gwadar port with Kashgar in China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. The initial phase highlights energy, transport, and industrial cooperation. The latest phase includes agricultural cooperation. Sichuan Litong Food Group and China Machinery Engineering Corp established a company in 2021 to carry out a red chilli farming project in Multan. Under the chilli farming project, the company is implementing 1000-acre chilli cultivation in Multan during 2022 & 2023. China's pepper technician is training Pakistani farmers to grow pepper seedlings in a greenhouse. The company also plans to build two pepper processing plants in Lahore and Multan.

CPGC's Long Term Plan (LTP) aims for development in the agriculture sector in Pakistan, which has a huge potential for enhancing agri export to the world. BRI agricultural cooperation focuses on increasing the use of modern machinery and synthetic fertilisers to enhance crop cultivation, under this cooperation warehouses and food processing plants also would be constructed to mitigate post-harvest losses. Cold storage plants and meat processing units would be constructed.

According to the Pakistan Observer, China is planning to outsource agricultural supplies in the form of joint ventures by investing in and developing processing zones, warehouses, dairy farming and cold storage stations in Pakistan. China-Pakistan agricultural cooperation gained manifold traction during the last year.

China has developed maize-soybean cultivation projects in 65 sites in Pakistan's Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions. The production of maize and soybeans at these sites reached 8,490 kg and 889 kg per hectare respectively. China is also developing the strip intercropping systems of maize-peanut, maize-pea, sugarcane-soybean, sugarcane-mustard, wheat-mustard, wheat-soybean, wheat-chickpea, potato-maize and canola-pea.

In June 2022 a new centre was established at Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (AAUR), the CPEC-Agriculture Cooperation Centre (ACC), announced to perform policy research, assist Chinese businesses in working in the agriculture sector, and foster institutional cooperation. Pakistan is also looking forward to enhancing banana production with Chinese cooperation.

Cotton germplasm is another important segment in Pak-China agricultural cooperation. China and Pakistan have cooperated in the field of gathering and identifying cotton germplasm resources. For the research of cotton germplasm Institute of Cotton Research (ICR) of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), collaborated with the Cotton Research Institute (CRI), Multan, the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), and other universities and scientific research institutions.

In July 2022, Tianjin Modern Vocational Technology College (TMVTC), China and MNS-University of Agriculture, Multan (MNSUAM) signed an online agreement for an agricultural machinery training program of Luban Workshop in Pakistan. The two institutions will jointly promote the sci-tech exchanges and cooperation on agricultural machinery, germplasm resources and the agricultural environment.

Pakistan is also working to grow sorghum crops as, along with the three main basic foods of the globe, sorghum is a crop that has increasingly gained acceptance around the world. Therefore, Pakistan's cooperation under CPEC has huge potential to gain new agri-technology from China and revolutionise its agricultural sector.

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