

PHDEC Newsletter

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From the Desk of the CEO, Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company (PHDEC)

Dear Stakeholders, Partners, and Horticulture Enthusiasts,

I am delighted to inform that PHDEC has planned Three-Year Work Plan for 2025-2028, a transformative roadmap crafted through extensive consultations with stakeholders across Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan. This plan builds on our past successes and aims to address the challenges and opportunities within Pakistan's vibrant horticulture sector. Our vision is to drive export-led growth, enhance value addition, and position Pakistan as a global leader in high-quality horticultural products.

The horticulture sector, contributing significantly to Pakistan's agricultural GDP and employing millions, holds immense potential with annual exports already reaching substantial figures. However, challenges such as low yields, high post-harvest losses, and limited value addition persist. Our plan seeks to overcome these hurdles by leveraging opportunities in high-value markets like GCC, ASEAN, Africa, China, Central Asia, and the EU, ensuring sustainable growth and global competitiveness.

Reflecting on our previous plan (2022-2025), we achieved notable milestones. We developed product manuals on Good Agricultural Practices in Urdu, conducted numerous workshops, seminars, and webinars on production, harvest, post-harvest, and value addition, and implemented pilot projects like mango and banana bagging in key regions. Additionally, we forged partnerships with agricultural universities and provincial research institutes, laying a strong foundation for future growth.

The 2025-2028 Work Plan focuses on key areas: strengthening skills and knowledge, conducting market research, enhancing operational capabilities, developing value-added infrastructure, improving cold chain facilities, and facilitating market access. We will conduct workshops and webinars on commodities like citrus, mango, banana, dates, onion, potato, chilies, garlic, and organic products, emphasizing production, pre-harvest, post-harvest, digital agriculture, and e-commerce. Cluster and value chain development will prioritize interventions, enlist progressive growers, certify exporters for international standards like HACCP and Global-GAP, and foster B2B linkages.

Market research will drive strategic planning through studies on diversified product development, high-density orchard systems, fruit bagging techniques, and export potential for peaches, guava, and organic products. We will also explore markets like China, analyze brand development, and incorporate AI and machine learning for demand prediction, alongside studying the introduction of exotic fruits to Pakistan.

To enhance infrastructure, we are prioritizing value-added projects such as solar drying units for chilies and fruits, mango dehydration facilities, certified nurseries for cherries, and olive oil extraction units. New initiatives include date processing facilities, nurseries for pecan-nut and walnut, and pilot projects for grapes, apples, and onions. Umbrella projects will support dehydration units, tomato processing, vegetable seed production, high-yielding variety imports, Pak-GAP protocols, and trial shipments for global promotion.

Cold chain development will focus on establishing storage facilities in major production hubs and enhancing cargo handling at key airports and seaports. We will also engage international experts to strengthen research institutes, ensuring cutting-edge advancements in horticulture.

Market access remains a cornerstone of our strategy. We will coordinate with the Department of Plant Protection and national plant protection organizations to secure SPS approvals and expedite dossiers for commodities like guava, strawberry, banana, and citrus for markets such as China, Thailand, Vietnam, and the USA. Real-time dashboards, trade negotiation capacity building, and Export Promotion Councils will further enhance branding and B2B linkages.

To execute this plan, we are assembling a team of horticulture experts, international consultants, legal advisors, food technologists, nutritionists, branding experts, data analysts, IT specialists, and research associates. Their expertise will ensure seamless implementation and measurable impact.

By 2028, we expect to significantly reduce post-harvest losses, increase the production-to-export ratio, achieve yields and prices closer to global averages, and expand access to high-end markets. This will boost farmer incomes, strengthen supply chains, create jobs, and contribute to Pakistan's export-led economy. Inclusive growth is a priority, with initiatives empowering women entrepreneurs in floriculture and medicinal plants and fostering public-private partnerships.

We invite all stakeholders—growers, exporters, policymakers, and partners—to collaborate with us. Your engagement is vital to realizing this vision. Stay connected for updates on our journey to transform Pakistan's horticulture sector!

Best regards,

Athar Hussain Khokhar

CEO, Pakistan Horticulture Development & Export Company (PHDEC)