

GIZ-FLR Project Wakhan “project progress in 2020”



Project title	Forest Land Restoration-FLR Project
Type of activities	Agro-forestry and DRR related infrastructure development. Fruit tree and non fruit tree plantation, Formation of Forestry Associations, their capacity building, forestry management Plans, and help in their implementations
Geographical area	Wakhan and Ishkashim, districts in Badakhshan Province Afghanistan
Timeframe	Jan 2020 – December 2020
Implementing Partner	Rupani Foundation Afghanistan,
Donor	GIZ

Wakhan District: GIZ- FLR Project

March 2021

2020: Results at a glance

- 170,000 non fruit trees were planted by three villages under the supervision of local FMAs
- As a result of these forestry plantation 41.5 hectares of barren land came directly under afforestation cover.
- 89% of the plants survived the first year (85% Yishmurgah & 94% at Sarkand afforestation site)
- 129.7 hectares of natural forest came under improved management through management of FMAs. these areas were quarantined for three years by FMA, regulating grazing and fuel wood uses.
- 10 fruit & vegetable gardens were established with 200 fruit trees planted and vegetable grown by households.
- 1 kilometer long irrigation canal was built to improve water supply to agriculture and afforestation sites at Sarkand village.

The Project

Wakhan is one of the most remote district of Badakhshan provinces. This remoteness has limited, access to markets and jobs for residents of Wakhan district, where over 90% of the population relies on subsistence agriculture and livestock production for their livelihoods. In recent years, erosion, loss of topsoil and loss of vegetative cover due to overgrazing and cutting of plants have negatively affected agricultural and livestock productivity. Moreover, the population is highly vulnerable to natural hazards, such as droughts, earthquakes, and flash floods. Climate change is expected to further exacerbate these challenges, including through changes in weather patterns, and increasing water scarcity as glaciers retreat and snowfall is reduced.

The GIZ-FLR project is implemented in a close coordination with Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock- MAIL, involving its provincial and district offices. Part of the FLR project village Forest Management Associations-FMA are established and physical projects are implemented through these FMAs as key community institutional partner. Project inputs focus on developing village forest management plans, constructing irrigation infrastructures to irrigate barren lands around villages, promotes planting green wood to restore the over exploited barren lands and mountain slopes around villages. Sedimentation flushing houses, flood protection walls and river embankments are built to reduce DRR risks and enclosure walls are built to safeguard both fruit and non-fruit project sites from livestock disturbances. FMAs are helped in developing resource use rules and regulations and assisted in their implementation

The FLR project in Wakhan effectively organizes every household in a given village as general body member of the village forest association. This gives equal access, benefit and opportunities for all its households. A member from each household participates in FLR project implementation and each participant gets equally paid for the work/labor, hence villagers share access and benefits of the common assets they create as a result of an FLR project. This is a powerful model, which economically uplifts the entire village. Villagers otherwise seeking paid labor outside the district usually shift the agriculture work burden on other household members, especially minors and women. As a result of an FLR project, able-workforce stays in the village where paid work becomes available. Benefits double as labors are paid for their work and they also become owner of a common asset created as a result of an FLR project. Availability of paid work in the village means that it reduces outmigration and lowers stress on growing population and unemployment in the urban areas. The assets created as a result will make communities resilient and livelihoods better in the villages and retain the workforce locally that is essential for progress of remote rural areas.

* FMA (Forest management Associations) are established and registered with the ministry of Agriculture

Wakhan: Key steps in implementation of FLR project

Step 1: Villagers are helped through participatory methods in forming a Forest Management Association-FMA. The FMA is registered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock-MAIL as a legal entity

Step 2: The FMA is helped in mapping out village land and forestry resources and in developing a forest management plan. In this village plan the community members identify key project interventions to increase forest assets and also key management interventions for protection and sustainable use of its village forestry resources.

Step 3: GIZ- FLR project helps the local FMA by funding construction of some of the key projects identified in the village management plans. These projects include construction of irrigation canals, sedimentation flushing houses, flood protection walls, river embankments, land preparation for afforestation, planting of fruit and non fruit trees and growing vegetables etc.

Step 4: The Local FMA is helped in developing forestry and water resource use rules and regulations and assisted in their implementation.

Step 5: FMA members, district agriculture extension staff and key community members are trained in various skills including participatory planning, documentation and management of association, forest, fruit tree and vegetable growing techniques etc.

Step 6: FLR staff and district agriculture extension officer monitors the activities of FMAs and the project implemented. This includes functions of the FMAs and implementation of the rules and regulations developed for management of the forest assets

Step 7: FMAs take ownership of the assets created on behalf of the community and are responsible for its aftercare and sustainable use

30,000 cuttings planted at Sarkand village Wakhan under the GIZ-FLR project



A sedimentation flushing pound constructed at Yishmurgah village Wakhan



Villagers building irrigation canal at Sarkand village Wakhan



Villager at Pukui, Wakhan gather at the afforestation site to start land preparation



40,000 trees planted at Pukui village Wakhan in the autumn of 2020



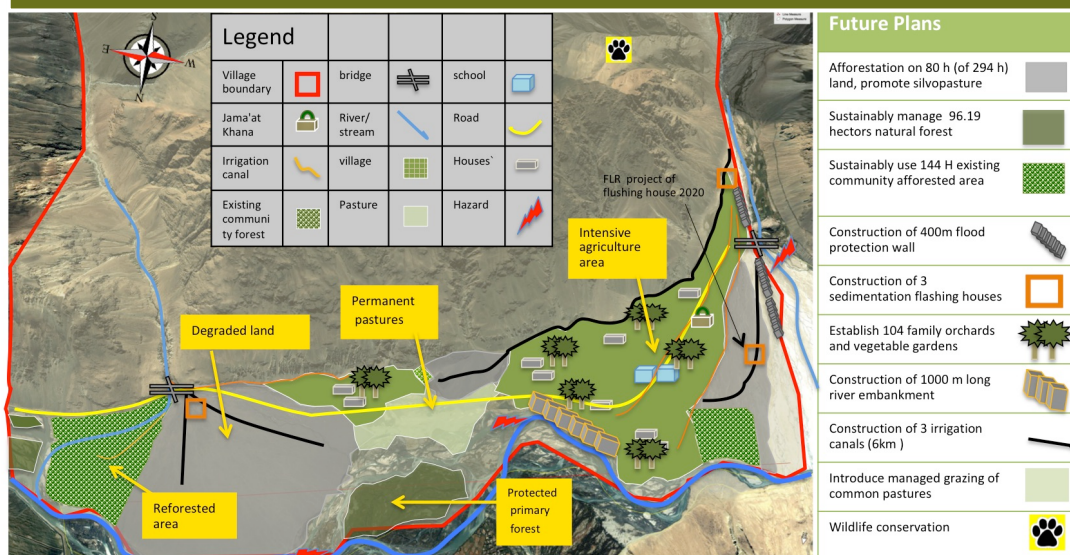
87, 000 willow cuttings were planted on a 20 hectares waste land Yishmurgah, Wakhan



A sedimentation flushing house constructed at Qala-e Panja village Wakhan



A future land-use map developed by the FMA for Qala-e Panja, Wakhan



Key technical features:

- The GIZ-FLR project helps communities across gender to develop participatory plans for forestry, land and water resources, mobilizes villagers for promotion and sustainable management of forestry resources in village.
- Before developing each afforestation plot an irrigation canal is built to link the project to a sustainable water source. If needed a sedimentation flushing house and concrete intake is constructed so the that plantation site is provided with all weather and sustainable water supply.
- Villagers choose the project, every household participates in the project work, project aftercare and equally share ownership and benefits.
- While working on FLR project implementation, the community members are paid for the labor work they perform and this secures much needed income for households .
- Forest rangers are appointed by villagers and are responsible for watering trees, keeping animals from grazing and villagers from cutting down trees as well as monitoring irrigation canals. Forest rangers are also responsible to ensure smooth implementation of resource use rules and regulations developed by the FMAs.
- All households are engaged twice a year in the cleaning and maintenance of irrigation canals and other .
- FMAs regulate resources use e.g. quarantining the afforestation site for 5-7 years.
- The project intends to introduce fuel efficient stoves to help reduce the demand for firewood and the exposure of women and children to hazardous smoke.

Inputs for FLR Project implementation

Labor	People get paid for the labor work they undertake on construction of irrigation infrastructure, afforestation activities. Every afforestation site also hires a forest guard and the project pays salary
Tools & materials	The project provides office tools and materials for for the FMAs for their day to day functions. Fruit tree sapling, vegetable and alfalfa seeds, Tools for fruit and vegetable growing and fencing for the fruit orchards.
Knowledge	The GIZ-FLR project facilitates the community to organize them. Facilitates and provides technical inputs in resource mapping, resource planning, training of community members and Govt. counterparts in management and administrative skills. Provides technical on the job training on fruit and vegetable growing etc.

Partnerships & complementarities:

- Partnerships are key to the FLR project in Wakhan. We work closely with the Govt. counterparts, at the village level FMA is a key local partner however the project also works closely with CDCs, and various committee established under citizen charter program.
- The FLR project seeks to integrate a variety of activities to ensure that forestry sector is approached holistically, integrating it with other key social sectors that mutually contribute to sustainability of the projects and the resilience of beneficiaries.
- Gender sensitivity is key feature of the FLR project in Wakhan. Our team members consist of 3 male and 3 female staff members. 40% of the members of village association are women. Participation of women in meetings, outreach and training exercises are overwhelmingly women . The physical projects proposed under FLR are designed in a way that they serve all gender and age groups. .
- Most of the Rupani Foundation staff comes from the communities. This approach has dual benefits: 1) it facilitates trust and a strong partnership with communities, and 2) it provides job opportunities to skilled and educated community-members, including women.
- Communities through their CDCs provide land, plant saplings for the Afforestation and also aftercare of the community forests

Sustainability

- The choice of activities and the identification of appropriate project locations in a given community is driven by the communities themselves ensuring strong buy-in from project participants.
- The solutions promoted are based on local capacities, so the communities are fully able to maintain and further expand the investments made.

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- 2623 MDW (Short term jobs, day labourers) were created As a result of the FLR project activities
- Long term employment for 3 forest guards were created to look after the afforestation sites.
- 5 FMA were formed, documentation, registration process completed at the district and provincial level and Ministry level currently awaiting issuance of certificate
- 5 new villages for FLR projects are identified, FMA elections held. Currently work underway for their documentations
- 10 people trained in fruit tree and vegetable gardening and 4 people trained in computer skills
- Sector-specific education and training products developed for the sustainable use of forest-related resources



From the field:

Case: Watershed plantation, Yishmurgh village Wakhan

Yishmurgh is a village in the Wakhan corridor with 44 households. The villagers of Yishmurgh formed an association in 2019 and developed a forest management plan for their village. The village FMA requested GIZ-FLR project to help them in establishment of community afforestation plantations on 20 hectares of waste land next to the village. To develop this wasteland, an irrigation canal and sedimentation flushing house was constructed involving every village households as labor. After completion of the irrigation canal and successfully taking irrigation water to the afforestation site, community members started working on the land preparation for the forest plantation. In April and May 2020 over 87, 000 willow cutting and sea-buckthorn plants were planted on this site. The plantation has grown particularly well with over 85% survival rate.

A forest guard was hired and is responsible for watering the trees, maintaining the forest growth and securing the site from livestock damage. The forest guard ensures that the forest is maintained under careful regulation by the village FMA. The caretaker only has little land, so this job is an important livelihoods opportunity for him. All households are engaged on an annual basis in the cleaning and maintenance of the irrigation canal. The FMA has developed rules and regulations for management and sustainable use of the forestry asset. The trees are still growing and will take another 7-8 years to be ready for felling or cutting of branches. Once matured the plantation will reduce the need to collect fuel wood in the mountains, thereby releasing time for other purposes and reducing the pressure on the natural vegetation, which has been significantly depleted over the years. Fodder is not yet collected from the afforestation site, but will be in the future, which will further reduce the dependency on the mountain vegetation. The community-members find the plantations highly beneficial and would like to further expand the plantation area.



“The FLR Project works closely with district government and local communities, it undertakes projects that are needed by local people. These projects are making the area greener, reducing poverty, creating paid work in the village and livelihood assets for people”

Mohammad Qurban, Agriculture Extension Officer, Wakhan District

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