

Call for proposals

Responsible and sustainable sugarcane supply chain development in Pakistan

Project background

PRODUCTION

Pakistan is the sixth largest cane producer in the world. Pakistan grows around 1 million hectares (ha) of sugarcane, more than all other cane producing countries, except Brazil, China, Cuba, India, and Thailand. Cane is also used for non-centrifugal sugars and seeds, meaning that the amount of land harvested for centrifugal sugar each year is only around two-thirds of the total.

The Punjab Province accounts for 60-65% or around 650,000 ha of the area under sugarcane. Rice, cotton, and sunflowers are major competitors for land use among farmers in that province. Other producing areas include the Sind Province which accounts for 25-30 percent% of sugarcane land, the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) which accounts for about 10%, and Baluchistan which accounts for less than 1%. In the Sind Province, cotton, wheat, rice, and sunflower are alternative crops, and growing bananas is becoming more popular. Due to higher yields, the Sind Province accounts for 40% of Pakistan's total sugar production.

The harvesting period follows the pattern of many other northern hemisphere crops, beginning in November/December and ending in April/May. Planting can be done in autumn or spring, with autumn planting (September-October) providing better results due to a longer growing season. Punjab and NWFP mostly plant in spring, and harvest eight to ten months later. In the Sind Province, most planting is in autumn which allows growth for up to 16 months. Harvesting begins in October in Sind and November in Punjab and the NWFP, and continues until April or May.

CONTEXT OF THE SUGARCANE FARMING IN PAKISTAN

The Pakistan milling sector has grown from two mills after World War II to 75 mills today. The milling capacity is 5 million tonnes of sugar, but the sector is operating at only about 60%. Difficulty in acquiring sufficient cane due to competition with non-centrifugal sugar producers (such as gur) is the major factor contributing to the underutilisation. Security of supply for any one mill is low. The other associated problem is the low extraction rate mostly due to deterioration in cane quality. In seeking the highest price for their crops, some farmers are willing to engage middlemen who market their cane to the highest bidder. In certain cases, sugarcane is transported several hundred kilometres, and can be up to several weeks old by the time it is milled, which negatively impacts the recovery of sugar. The poor condition of some roads, and vehicles, adds to this problem.

CHILD LABOUR

Children in Pakistan are vulnerable to exploitation and UNICEF estimates that about 3.3 million Pakistani children are trapped in child labour, with Punjab and Sindh being the worst provinces. However, there is no public data or coordinated child protection system in Pakistan. This makes it impossible to have an accurate picture of its prevalence in the sugarcane sector. Children engaged in agricultural work have been documented harvesting cotton, wheat, and sugarcane. Children may work as unpaid family helpers on their parents' farm or migrate with parents to find work on plantations during the harvest season. Children working in sugarcane cultivation are often engaged in hazardous work, which should be restricted to people aged 18 years and over based on the International Labour Organization. The two main activities that may be classified as hazardous in sugarcane cultivation are the application of agrochemicals and manual harvesting. Children might be also used in other activities such as planting, cane or top and leaf gathering. Drivers of child labour in sugarcane are the same as in other agricultural commodities. Child labour incidences are expected to worsen with the impact of Covid-19.

FORCED LABOUR

The practice of using wage advances, or peshai, has been part of labour relations in the region for over two centuries. In the late 1990s, there was a concerted effort by the national and provincial governments to enact legislation to end bonded labour. These changes have had a minor impact on bonded labour in the agricultural sector. This is primarily due to a lack of actual change by landowners regarding their employment practices and a lack of enforcement requiring them to do so. Around 2.1 million people are working as bonded labourers in Pakistan. Bonded labour in agriculture is most prevalent in Sindh and southern Punjab.

BONSUCRO

Bonsucro is the global sustainability platform for sugarcane, one of the world’s most important crops. Its purpose is to collectively accelerate the sustainable production and uses of sugarcane – for farmers, millers, buyers, and end-users. It convenes its members and other partners to address critical challenges in the sugarcane sector, and drive performance and impact through its system of sustainability standards for sugarcane.

Bonsucro works across all sugarcane products and derivatives – sugar, ethanol, molasses, and bagasse. It also works across both traditional and newer market sectors, from sugar and alcohol to biofuels and bioplastics.

Bonsucro manages a community of more than 280 members in over 50 countries from across the sugarcane supply chain, representing 27% of production and 20% of buyers – from farmers and millers to traders and end-users.

In January 2022, Bonsucro published its new Production Standard with new requirements to address global risks, such as greenhouse gas emissions, water, biodiversity, and respect for workers’ rights in the sugarcane sector.

The Bonsucro Code of Conduct calls on all members to respect human rights in their sugarcane supply chains. The Bonsucro Production Standard (BPS) requires respect for human rights and labour standards for certified entities.

STRENGTHEN HUMAN RIGHTS & DECENT WORK IN SUGARCANE FARMING & MILLING is one of the strategic aims in Bonsucro’s new five-year strategic plan.

Bonsucro will continue to drive Decent Work and safer working conditions for farmers, farmworkers and mill workers – including zero tolerance for forced labour and child labour. Our regional and national programmes will identify and work with partners to remedy the most pressing social and labour issues in their countries, taking account of the situation in each country.

Project profile

Bonsucro is partnering with a fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) company, which has conducted a review of forced labour and child labour in its sugar supply chain in Pakistan. A study was conducted which included a report providing a macro-level overview of the child and forced labour and land use issues in Pakistan, as well as a brief overview of the legal framework. It also provides a micro-level assessment of mills that supply to the FMCG company. These mills and a sample of farms were visited by the research team, who used qualitative methods to understand applicable practices and conditions relating to labour and human rights. This report will be given to the appointed consultants, prior to the commencement of the project.

Objectives of the project:

1. To develop the knowledge and capacity of six sugar mills in Pakistan in order to support the prevention of child labour and forced labour and to improve labour health and safety. Mills and select farms will be supported to address these systemic issues through a management systems approach, which will:
 - Assess gaps
 - Develop capacity
 - Build an action plan
 - Address identified gaps
 - Remediate the risks
 - Roll out the action plan
2. To implement Bonsucro requirements with a focus on human rights compliant practices at the sugar mill and select farmer levels.
3. To identify government initiatives with the view to encouraging the mills and organisations to leverage these available programs for child labour referral and other corrective action, as required.

Outcome: Implementation of practices that comply with human rights policies and other requirements (through Bonsucro standards), with a special focus on the prevention of child labour, forced labour, and the improvement of labour health and safety by nine sugar mills and their selected smallholder farmers, in order to enhance ethical and sustainable sugarcane and cane sugar production in Pakistan.

Output: Selected six mills have knowledge and capacity to meet human rights policy requirements (through Bonsucro standards) with enhanced capacity on child rights and forced labour prevention practices, and have developed a time-bound roadmap to address the identified gaps.

To support the select six mills to achieve the objectives of the project, Bonsucro is looking for an external partner that will undertake the following activities under full confidentiality, in collaboration with any other project partners and the participating mills:

a) Deliver comprehensive training sessions for eight mills on human rights policies and other relevant requirements (through three of Bonsucro’s Standards – Bonsucro Production Standard, Bonsucro Chain of Custody Standard, Bonsucro Smallholder Standard). These should be delivered to the mill project teams and future trainers, including those that will train smallholder farmers. Critical components of the training will include a deep dive into child protection and forced labour prevention.

b) Conduct a gap assessment of the six sugar mills and a representative sample of 10-20 smallholder farmers on their compliance with the requirements of the Bonsucro Standards/human rights. The gap assessment will cover an assessment of the employment and recruitment conditions of workers employed by the mills and selected farms. The assessment must use a local implementation partner and be supported by randomised in-person field-based interviews with workers, and mill-selected farmers.

c) Develop gap assessment reports and recommendations on what should be improved and how, in order to close the identified gaps in the mills and representative farms and bring them into compliance.

d) Support the six sugar mills to develop an action plan which will help them to drive the implementation of the recommended improvements in the mills and selected farms. The mills (with support) will develop a company action plan outlining how they can apply these learnings to implement the recommended improvements from the activities at both mill and farm level.

e) Provide support and follow-up on the implementation of the recommended improvements (three-hour conference call with all the participating mills on a monthly basis).

f) Develop a final project report (in both Word and PPT) to complete the project which can be shared with stakeholders.

Focused regions: Punjab, Pakistan

Project Time frame

30 months starting in 2022

Requirements of the external partner

Bonsucro is now looking for an external partner to collaborate with to fulfill this project in Pakistan.

Key requisites:

- Can operate legally in Pakistan for all operational and financial activities under the project scope.
- Capability and capacity to deliver all deliverables (points a-f above).
- A credible network in the sugar sector in Pakistan, combined with a good local network and knowledge of the local culture and social practices
- Experience addressing social challenges in the agriculture sector in Pakistan on labour rights, particularly on child labour, forced labour, and labour health and safety.
- Ability to liaise with the government and access schemes related to child development, labour welfare, and the health and safety of workers.
- Capability and capacity to conduct gap assessments for nine sugar mills against Bonsucro Standards and national and international frameworks in relation to the specific issues mentioned in the proposal.
- Ability to develop methodology and a credible science-based approach for farmer sampling and gap assessment against Bonsucro's standards.
- Can identify and engage with experts (particularly on child labour, forced labour, and labour health and safety) from the sector according to the needs of the project scope.
- Capability to develop a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to cover project monitoring and reporting (including formal quarterly project progress reports).
- Capability to communicate fluently in the local languages.
- Sufficient familiarity with Bonsucro's assurance system (the Production Standard, Smallholder Standard, and Chain of Custody Standard) to deliver training.
- Experience in training and capacity building on sustainable practices.

- High standards of professionalism, responsiveness, confidentiality, and accountability for the results.

How to Apply

To apply, please submit a solid proposal that includes the following:

- A summary of your understanding of the specific child labour and forced labour problems in the Pakistan agricultural sector (1 page).
- A full proposal which demonstrates a clear understanding of the expected deliverables, including:
 - Methodology for each deliverable
 - A GANTT/work-plan
 - A monitoring and evaluation framework
 - An approach to risk management
- Consultant/team composition and profiles outlining relevant experience and qualifications
- Examples and case studies of relevant work delivered by the consultant/s
- Itemised quote for the work in £ GBP, including details of daily rates and number of people/days.

Bonsucro will accept applications from individual organisations or consortiums. Preference will be given to applicants who are able to travel to/in Pakistan and work in the local languages of Punjab and KPK, as well as in English.

Proposals should be sent to Ritu Baruah at: ritu@bonsucro.com

Interested consultants/organisations should contact Ritu Baruah, (email address: ritu@bonsucro.com) for any queries regarding this opportunity. The closing date for submissions of proposals is **7 April 2022**.

Terms of service

Contracting with the selected consultant/organisation is subject to a due diligence process. In addition, all potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed through a conflict of interest form. The contract will include specific confidentiality clauses that the consultant/organisation must adhere to.

ANNEX 1 - Pakistan Project RACI Matrix

Definitions:

- Responsible: This person does the work to get the task done. The responsible function could assign the tasks to its qualified external parties however it doesn't change the functional responsibility.
- Accountable: This person is accountable for the task being correct and complete. **Accountability cannot be outsourced.**
- Consulted: These people provide vital information toward the project and make two-way communication mandatory for the project's success. The consulted party generally consists of a small group of people who tend to be experts in a relevant subject matter to the project.
- Informed: These people should be kept in the loop regarding the project's progress and make one-way communication essential. The informed party tends to consist of multiple people who are communally affected by finishing the tasks associated with the project's completion.

Key Deliverables	RACI	
	Bonsucro	Technical Partner
Stage 0 – Preparation of Project		
0.1. Prepare, submit proposal to Bonsucro for review		R A
0.2. Identify, screen, assess, finalize external technical partners	R A	C I
0.3. Develop and sign-up agreement with the external partners	R A	R
Stage 1 - Labor Supply Chain Mapping		
1.1. Develop the technical supply chain mapping/gap assessment process & protocol (questionnaires, steps, R&R, timing...) to identify any issues and risks of mills and farms	A	R
1.2. Approve the technical supply chain mapping/gap assessment process & protocol	A R	C I
1.3. Conduct online interviews (government agencies, buyers, mills, farmers, workers, NGO's, any other relevant stakeholders...) to really understand the status, issues and risks, as well as the drivers. Issue interview outcome summary report.	A	R
1.4. Conduct technical desk research (reports, data....) and summarize to report for review, wherever needed	A	R
1.5. Review, discuss and approve interview outcome summary report.	A R	C
1.6. Physical mill and field visits for supply chain mapping/gap assessment to identify issues and risks on site for the process & system of the mills and their supply chains.	A	R
1.7. Develop and endorse the supply chain mapping/gap assessment report.	A	R
1.8. Present final report to stakeholders and get alignment	A	R
Stage 2 - Internal Advisory Report		
2.1. Develop summary report of identified gaps and risks, and make recommendations of practicable solution options in Pakistan to address the gaps and remediate the risks	A	R
2.2. Review and approve final advisory report	A R	C I
2.3. Present report to Bonsucro management to get final approval	A	R
2.4. Submit report to stakeholders and get alignment	A R	R

Key Deliverables	RACI	
	Bonsucro	Technical Partner
Stage 3 – Mill Action Plan		
3.1. Develop technical training material for mills/farmers	A	R
3.2 Conduct training to mills and farmers online	A	R
3.3 Support to mills to develop the action plans	A	R
3.4 Review the action plans submitted by mills	A	R
3.5 Online meetings with mills to finalize the action plan	A	R
3.6 Present final action plan to Bonsucro management for approval	A	R
3.7. Present overall action plan to stakeholders and get alignment	A R	R
Stage 4 - Mills implementation of action plans		
4.1 Provide solid technical support on the ground and monthly meetings for the technical review with all mills together	A	R
4.2. Conduct final online wrapping workshop with all stakeholders to summarise the challenges, achievements, and learning's	A R	R
4.3. Develop an overall project presentation to present to stakeholders for communication	A R	C

Annex 2 – useful reference information

- [ILO report on child labour in Pakistan](#) (May 2017)
- A [project](#) funded by Ferrero to address child labour issues in the hazelnut production in Tukey
- Ethical Trade Initiative [guidance on child labour](#)
- Bonsucro will share more information/reports that we feel useful, whenever available.