PAKISTAN NUTRIBIZ: FINAL PITCH DAY
The Pakistan NutriBiz: SUN Pitch Competition 2019-20 concluded in February 2020 by surfacing nutrition-sensitive innovations & demonstrating mechanisms to collaborate and invest in purposeful innovations for improved nutrition.

The competition provided innovation acceleration support to 10 innovative and promising SMEs selected out of 53 applications received for the innovation challenge. The Final Pitch Day was held on 13th February at Marriott Hotel, Islamabad. The pitch day was divided into three broad sessions including pitching session, a panel discussion session on accelerating innovations in the agri-food systems, and a concluding session. Ms. Shandana Gulzar Khan, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians and Federal Parliamentary Secretary for commerce, was the Chief Guest of the event, while Mr. Muhammad Azeem Khan, Chairman National Agriculture Council (NARC), was the guest of honor of the event.

THE PITCH SESSION
The Pitch Session offered the participating SMEs a chance to present their ideas in front of a panel of judges and investors. The following 10 innovative SMEs presented their ideas:

- Bakhabar Kissan - Digital agriculture platform
- Chatha Bio Care - Bio farming solutions company
- Chaudhry Food Products - Healthy snack producing company
- Food Factory - Fruit based snacks company
- Food Trax - Food traceability solutions startup
- Fruges - Edible coating solutions
- Plate 101 - Healthy home-cooked food marketplace
- Pouila Inc - SaaS & IoT based solution for poultry sector losses
- Shazday Fruits - Healthy snacks and fruit company
- Subzi.pk - Home fruits and vegetable delivery services
The panel discussion untangled the underlying causes of limited innovations in the local agri-food systems, challenges and opportunities in investing on innovations. The panelists were Dr. Muhammad Nasir (FLC Engro Foods), Mr. Noor Alam Khan (SBN Pakistan), Mr. Zeeshan Bin Shahid (TIE Islamabad), Mr. Khizer Alam Khan (Bakhabar Kisan), Ms. Shamama Arbab (Euro Foods), and Dr. Fayyaz Ashraf (National Foods). The panel highlighted lack of policy focus, limited investment and absence of coordination mechanism to accelerate the innovations are the major constraints to limit innovations.

Pakistani entrepreneurs and innovators are tirelessly working and a wide variety of innovations and innovative ideas are surfacing which have the potential to address many agri-food system problems and generate impact in form of increased food and nutrition security and livelihood opportunities for smallholder farmers. The opportunities are huge for agri-food systems innovators both at national and global level but they need careful fostering to grab those opportunities. The panel recommended investing in strengthening innovation systems within the agri-food systems with long-term vision. This would be possible through policy priority, setting a vision and establishing a right (hybrid) innovation acceleration mechanisms.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS AND PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

The announcement of winners and prize distribution ceremony marked the end of the Final Pitch Day for Pakistan Nutribiz: SUN Pitch Competition 2019-20. The Chief Guest, Ms. Shandana Gulzar Khan, Member of the National Assembly of Pakistan appreciated the overall activity and efforts of the innovative SMEs. She highlighted that the Government had commenced policy shifts to provide an enabling environment for the businesses to thrive in, and invited the participating SMEs to become part of the national discourse on nutrition-sensitive innovations. Mr. Aslam Shaheen, SUN Focal Point and Chief of Nutrition, Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives highlighted the impacts of malnutrition on the country's development while Mr. Faiz Rasool, Head of Program, GAIN Pakistan highlighted GAIN's efforts in this arena.

NATIONAL WINNER & RUNNERS-UP OF PAKISTAN NUTRIBIZ: SUN PITCH COMPETITION 2019-2020

National Winner of the Pakistan Nutribiz: SUN Pitch Competition 2019-20, Poulta Inc, is ‘Software as a Service (SaaS)’ based model that helps poultry farmers to detect and/or predict their problems at an early stage and take corrective measures in a timely manner. Poulta Inc provides the luxury of real-time central monitoring of poultry farms through a single dashboard to derive data trends and carry out predictive analysis.

Ba Khabar Kissan (BKK), the First Runner Up of the competition, is a digital hub for agriculture. It is a platform that connects all stakeholders in the agricultural value chain to address a multitude of problems such as a lack of information on best and appropriate farming practices, non-availability of weather data, lack of access to quality inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) and credit etc.

Fruges is the Second Runner Up of the competition and the company envisions a world where no food goes to waste. To this end, it is producing Epeel, an edible coating/film, for fresh fruits and vegetables to preserve their freshness, increase their resilience to long supply chains and prolong their shelf life in order to reach nationwide markets.

For further details, visit:
www.sunpitchcompetition.com
ELIMINATING TRANS-FAT WORKSHOP

SUN business network (SBN) Pakistan and International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA) organized a workshop for local companies and other stakeholders on elimination of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids (iTFAs) from food value chains from 22-23 January 2020.

Representative of Ministry of National Health Services, private sector including edible oil processors, importers and food processing companies participated. The experts from IFBA and local institutions highlighted how iTFAs can be eliminated from the food chains. Different options to address the issue including of policy and regulatory changes, alternative technical and technology solutions were discussed and recommendations were made. Four companies made on the spot commitment to eliminate iTFAs from their products by 2023 in accordance with the goals of the World Health Organization (WHO).

QUARTERLY MEETING OF SBN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The SUN Business Network (SBN)’s quarterly Executive Committee (EC) Meeting was held on 25th February 2020 in Karachi. The meeting started off by briefly discussing the network's progress and achievements in 2019, and then moved on to discussing plans for 2020:

The following key points were discussed during the meeting:

- SBN will enhance its engagement with other stakeholders including other SUN Networks including government at national and provincial level.
- Efforts should be made to highlight the role of SBN to all stakeholders at all levels including the political leadership
- Certain changes to SBN Working Groups were proposed and their actions realigned with key operational functions and outputs
- Efforts should be made to increase female representation in EC and General Body.

ABOUT SBN

In 2010, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement was launched to support national leadership and collective action to scale up nutrition. The SUN Business Network (SBN) is one of the four global networks that supports SUN countries (along with the UN, Civil Society and Donor Networks). It is convened by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and further supported by an Advisory Group comprised of senior business leaders.

The SBN aims to reduce malnutrition in all its forms through engaging and mobilising business to act, invest and innovate in responsible and sustainable actions and operations to improve nutrition. The SBN provides a neutral platform to broker partnerships and collaboration between business and all actors on nutrition at a national, regional and global level.

SBN Pakistan seeks to increase the availability and affordability of safe, nutritious foods for low income consumers through capacitating businesses and other relevant stakeholders and incentivising positive business actions. SBN Pakistan focuses on specific areas in the food system including creating an enabling environment for businesses to act on nutrition, accelerating nutrition sensitive innovations and promoting cutting-edge and inclusive business models across the food system that address the constraints of different sectors that are important for food diversity and improved nutrition.