

## Going Global Partnerships

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# Introducing a sectoral approach to skills development in the food and beverage industry in Pakistan



*Representatives from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC) and from People 1<sup>st</sup> International*

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## Context

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, located in northwestern region of Pakistan is popularly known as the 'land of hospitality' and a hub of tourism. This region has been experiencing a pressing need to enhance skills as rapid industrial growth has outpaced the existing workforce's capacity. Through collaboration with People 1<sup>st</sup> and the British Council, KPEZDMC hoped to address specific skill gaps in food and beverages sector, deemed crucial for economic development.

## Project Overview

The main objective of this project was to build the capacity of the Pakistani partners to conduct TVET planning through effective public-private partnerships (PPP) to better meet the needs of industry.

To achieve this, the project focused on the establishment of an Industry Advisory/Taskforce Group (IATG) to promote and implement a sectoral approach to the development of skills in the food and beverages sector in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Economic Zone.

Although the intended focus for the IATG was mostly on the food and beverages sector, it was hoped it would provide a model for PPP that could be adapted for other sectors.

Throughout the project, People 1<sup>st</sup> engaged with a wide range of different stakeholders (KPEZDMC, higher education institutions, the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), government agencies including the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), employers etc). This facilitated the development of a strong PPP approach and model. All stakeholders recognised the need for enhanced PPPs to:

- address skills gaps to support sector productivity;
- support a more structured and collaborative approach to the development of labour market information (LMI);
- design relevant training programmes and qualifications; and
- support the development of TVET-industry partnerships.



*A stakeholder workshop was held in November 2023 which solidified the establishment of the IATG.*

The development of the IATG was advanced significantly following the inbound visit to the UK. The delegates were able to attend the British Council's Skills Seminar and undertake capacity building activities delivered by People 1<sup>st</sup>. The visit focused on sharing best practice in TVET/industry collaboration through the following activities:

- visiting Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMet) to learn of their partnership with the National Skills Academy for Food and Drink (NSAFD). BMet shared how they work with industry to create tailored programmes designed to meet the needs of employers; and
- site visits, to meet with employers and apprentices to gain insight into modern manufacturing processes, quality standards and innovation.

The visit to the UK provided the delegates with an opportunity to explore models of employer/TVET partnerships that support the development of high quality, relevant TVET programmes.

Another key part of the project was the development and implementation of a survey to gather LMI data, to assess the current skills landscape and determine future needs.

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Towards the end of the project, People 1<sup>st</sup> held an in-country visit focussed on practical actions such as strengthening industry-education collaboration, improving the quality of training and establishing funding partnerships.

Proposed initiatives emerging from the workshop included strengthening work-based learning opportunities, developing technical skills academies and targeted upskilling programs for employees. The event also stressed the need to integrate sustainability and innovation into future training programmes.



*People 1<sup>st</sup> International visit their international skills partners in Pakistan*

## Impact

The successful establishment of the IATG has been an important project achievement. Supported by People 1<sup>st</sup>, the KPEZDMC successfully took ownership of the IATG making it an effective forum for sector skills dialogues.

Engagement with key stakeholders facilitated the gathering of insights into skills gaps and industry needs. These findings will be used to shape the future training curriculum.

The development and implementation of the LMI study demonstrated the practical application and value of sector bodies to stakeholders and developed their capacity to deliver LMI activities.

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The project highlighted the lack of a structured strategy to promote gender equality within the industry. A commitment was made to address the gender balance within the industry in the future and to provide new opportunities for female students through work-based learning.

The KPEZDMC's strategic role and network across a range of sectors provides an opportunity to broaden and replicate IATG activities. They hope to expand the IATG from food and drink to other key areas including emerging sectors, like renewable energy and digital technologies, that align with regional economic goals. During the project, they worked closely with TVET sector policy makers (e.g. NAVTTC and TEVTA) and this will facilitate linkages to wider VET reform or policy interventions.

*"Through the Going Global Partnerships, IATG created a platform to mobilize stakeholders and address the skills gap in the KP industry. Our pilot project in the food and beverage sector of the Hattar economic zone is benefiting multiple industries. As IATG serves as the focal board, we gather industry demand to tailor training programs, ensuring that economic zones have access to skilled workforce." Nouman Nadeem, Head of Department, Industrial Facilitation and Support, KP Economic Zone*

*"Collaboration is key: by bringing together diverse stakeholders, we can create training programs that are relevant, inclusive, and effective.", KPEZDMC stakeholder*

## About the partners

**UK partner: People 1st International Ltd** (People 1<sup>st</sup>) partners with industry, development banks, government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGO)s and education providers to create sustainable approaches to workforce development.

Building on their heritage as a sector skills council, they have worked in more than 50 countries delivering skills solutions that challenge social and gender exclusion, address the barriers to work and support continuous professional development.

**Partner in Pakistan: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC)** is wholly owned by the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The company aims to facilitate focused industrial growth, by developing modern industrial estates, leading to mass job creation, skills enhancement and increased productivity.

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*This partnership is supported by funding from the British Council's Going Global Partnerships programme.*

*Going Global Partnerships supports universities, colleges and wider education stakeholders around the world to work together towards stronger, equitable, inclusive, more internationally connected higher education, science and TVET.*