

Melon Enterprise



In June 2008, the Economic Regeneration unit of NABDP signed contracts with three Facilitating Partner NGOs to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in three provinces - Balkh, Bamyan and Herat. One of these SMEs is a melon enterprise in Balkh province, which is supported by the NGO Hand in Hand (HIH). The entrepreneur, Mohammed Azam Afridi, has been running his enterprise, 'Angaza', for several years now. Angaza selects and buys Alkani melons from local Afghan farmers and then packages and exports them to India. The Alkani is a delicious, sweet-tasting yellow melon which can last for over 60 days after being harvested, and as such is particularly suitable for being exported. Alkani melons grow well in the northern area of Afghanistan, and as they require little water they have been especially successful during the recent drought.

NABDP and HIH have provided an initial business development grant, assistance with developing a business plan, as well as help with establishing a new project site and obtaining equipment. Mr. Afridi is very happy with the results, having delivered over 200,000 kilos of melon to India in his first season of economic assistance. He now employs over 30 staff, who have been helped with management and financial training by the implementing partners. Indirectly, the project has helped over 50 farmers in the local district to sell their melons to the warehouse for shipping. A second grant is being awarded to Mr. Afridi to allow him to further expand his business and more training will be provided. As well as boosting the local economy, the project given hope to farmers in the area that they can earn a legal and successful living without resorting to growing hashish and opium, which was previously common in Balkh and Jawzjan provinces.

