

# ORIC Newsletter

University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

December 16 to 31, 2024



## PROGRESSIVE FARMERS FROM SIBBI VISIT UAF

Climate changes are posing a serious threat to the agriculture sector that may deepen the food security crisis in future. We need to shift towards climate-smart agriculture to ensure the food security and to feed the ever-increasing population, said by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan while briefing the participants of a delegation of farmers from Balochistan in his chamber.

The Balochistan's farmers visited the varsity to get information about the innovative approaches. The delegation visited different part of the country under the auspices of Tameer E Khalaq Foundation. The team was led by Mehmood Tareen Program Manager of the Foundation. Director ORIC UAF Dr Muhammad Imran Arshad, Dr Jalal Arif, Dr Khurram Zia and others also spoke on the occasion.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan added that cotton area was shifting to Balochistan due to climate change for which the farmers should harvest the benefits. He added UAF is providing free education to the students from Balochistan in a bid to support underprivileged regions and promote national integration.

He stressed upon adopting modern agriculture practices to increase per acre production and make agriculture a profitable profession. He said that innovative and sustainable agricultural methods are imperative to ensure food security and economic growth.



Inside

# NEWS

- Progressive Farmers from Balochistan visit UAF
- Central Hi-Tech Lab organizes Training Workshop
- IKI Small Grants- 6th Call for Proposals
- USEFP Fulbright Scholarship for Graduate study in USA
- Engro Learning Center organizes two technical sessions
- Year-end Note and Seasons's Greetings- 2025 by Director ORIC

He urged farmers to actively embrace contemporary techniques such as climate smart agriculture, and biotechnology etc to address the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in Pakistan.

Mehmood Tareen, founder from Tameer e Khalaq foundation, said that during 2022 the unprecedented rainfall not only disrupted agricultural activities but also inflicted significant economic losses on farmers across the province. He said wheat, cotton, veggies, apple, and cherry are their main agriculture productions. He said that his NGO had been actively working on agriculture and health sectors since 2004. They visited the different labs of the varsity and also held meetings ad AARI and visited their Labs.



Funding Opportunity

IKI Small Grants –  
6th Call for Proposals

We are excited to share an excellent funding opportunity from the International Climate Initiative (IKI) Small Grants Program. Applications are now open for the 6th Call for Proposals, offering funding of up to 200,000 euros for local organizations undertaking climate and biodiversity action projects.

**Key Details:**

- Funding Scope: Climate and biodiversity initiatives.
- Eligible Applicants: Local organizations in ODA-eligible countries.
- Application Deadline: 15 January 2025.

We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to support impactful environmental projects.

For more information and to apply, visit the official page: [IKI Small Grants Website](#)  
If you have any questions, you can directly contact the IKI Small Grants team at [iki-small-grants@giz.de](mailto:iki-small-grants@giz.de)

## CENTRAL HI-TECH LAB ORGANIZES 2-DAY TRAINING FOR LAB OPERATORS

The Central Hi-Tech Laboratory in collaboration with ORIC, organized an in-house training program on ISO-17025 from December 26 to 27, 2024. This comprehensive two-day training was designed to enhance participants' understanding of the ISO/IEC 17025 standard, which specifies the general requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories. The program aimed to strengthen laboratory practices and ensure compliance with international standards for quality and technical competence. The training was attended by faculty members, researchers, and technical staff from different departments and constituent Colleges of the varsity. Director ORIC Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad participated in the inaugural session as chief guest and underscored the need to raise the standards of the existing labs of the varsity to meet the global quality parameters. He assured his unequivocal support to equip the labs with all the requisite technologies adding that in recent past, ORIC had provided enormous funds to Hi-Tech Lab to purchase and install Zeta sizer and further putting its resources to meet the emerging needs. Dr. Ahsan Nazir, Director ORIC, National Textile University Faisalabad and Hafiz M. Ibrahim, Head Quality Control, Saffron Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd served as the resource persons. They brought with them years of experience in laboratory accreditation and auditing, ensuring a high level of expertise throughout the sessions.

The program was divided into multiple interactive sessions covering theoretical knowledge, case studies, and practical applications. The training began with an overview of ISO/IEC 17025, its importance, and its role in enhancing the credibility of laboratory results. Participants were introduced to the two main components of the standard: management requirements and technical requirements. Emphasis was placed on the development and implementation of a QMS to ensure consistency, reliability, and impartiality in laboratory operations. Discussions included document control, corrective actions, and internal audits.

The sessions focused on technical aspects such as method validation, measurement uncertainty, traceability of measurements, and equipment calibration. Real-world examples were provided to help participants understand how to implement these practices effectively. A dedicated session addressed the integration of risk management into laboratory processes, highlighting how proactive risk assessment can prevent errors and enhance overall performance.



The training provided participants with a clear understanding of the ISO-17025 framework and its application in laboratory settings. Attendees gained valuable skills in implementing quality management systems and technical processes, preparing their laboratories for accreditation. Moreover, the program fostered a culture of continual improvement and quality assurance within the institution.

The ISO-17025 In-House Training 2024 was a resounding success, equipping participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to elevate laboratory standards to international levels. The efforts of the Central Hi-Tech Lab, UAF, in organizing such a significant training program were highly appreciated. This initiative not only strengthens the university's research capabilities but also contributes to the global credibility of its laboratory results.

  
**BE READY**  
**HEC**  
**NRPU RESEARCH FUNDING**

It is to inform that Higher Education Commission (HEC) after a long interval, is planning to launch a "Call for Research Proposal under National Research Program for Universities (NRPU)" at end of December, 2024. It is high time to be ready for submission of Research Proposals against this Call.

NRPU is a flagship Research Program of HEC for funding research grants on competitive/ merit basis for high-quality and promising scientific research projects that demonstrate strategic relevance and cast impact to the local industry and society. Principal Investigator (PI) should be a faculty member at higher education institution in Pakistan and encouraged to submit proposals that are collaborative in scope, with teams including junior and senior academic staff, both male and female researchers and appropriate sectoral/ industrial collaborators. Principal Investigators are also encouraged to include students as part of the project team who have worked on the academic research underpinning the NRPU proposal. ORIC will submit proposals after internal preliminary evaluation by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Kindly submit timely to avoid any unwanted situation.

## COMMERCIALIZATION OF ANALYTICAL SERVICES AT UAF

The office of Research Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC) makes utmost efforts to promote research commercialization under UAF framework. Recently after going through the due process, following diagnostic labs have been included in the Commercialization Stream of the varsity to provide authenticated analytical services to the researchers and civil society. It is anticipated that these labs will provide state-of-the-art services to the researchers & civil society and will generate revenue for the university.

Environmental bio-geochemistry Lab.	Dr. Abdul Wakeel, Inst. of Soil & Env. Sciences
Medicinal Biochemistry Research Lab.	Dr. M. Shahid, Dept. of Biochemistry
Soil Science Lab. UAF Constituent College, Depalpur	Principal
PBG Lab. UAF UAF Constituent College, Depalpur	Principal
Sunflower Research Lab.	Dr. Humera Razaq, Dept. of PBG
Animal & Dairy Sciences Lab.	Dr. Sibtain Ahmad, Inst. Animal & Dairy Sci.

## PARTIAL RESEARCH SUPPORT TO POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AT UAF

The committee constituted to recommend Partial Research Support to Post-Graduate students preferably PhD scholars on quarterly basis after interviewing the students (physically) for soliciting updates regarding current research status, tentative outcome, justification of requested budget and availability of funds for this initiative recommended following PhD scholars for receiving Partial Research Support amounting to Rs. 0.8 million out of ORIC Funds (under Grant in Aid (Research Grant/Seed Grants), for the consumables indispensable for their research.

S.#	Name of Student/Regd. No./Degree	S.#	Name of Student/Regd. No./Degree
1	Mr. Muhammad Rehan Sajid 2020-ag-425 PhD (Pharmacology)	6	Ms. Maira Abdul Razzak 2015-ag-7403 PhD Human Nutrition & Dietetics
2	Ms. Muafia Baigum 2020-ag-1350 PhD (Biochemistry)	7	Ms. Sadia Ilyas 2013-ag-6299 PhD Agribusiness
3	Ms. Farzana Zafar 2017-ag-429 PhD (Biochemistry)	8	Ms. Maham Bhatti 2021-ag-815 PhD Human Nutrition & Dietetics
4	Ms. Urwa Irshad 2014-ag-4632 PhD (Horticulture)	9	Ms. Tahrim Ramzan 2018-ag-321 PhD Botany
5	Ms. Ghulshan Abdul Sattar 2017-ag-3627 PhD CABB	10	Ms. Maha Naeem 2018-ag-1964 PhD Food Technology



## APPLY NOW FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES FULBRIGHT 2026

### About the Fulbright

Fulbright is the flagship scholarship program of the U.S. Government. The Fulbright scholarship is managed by the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) under Fulbright policies and regulations. The scholarship funds graduate study in the United States for a Master's or PhD degree, including tuition, required textbooks, airfare, a living stipend, and health insurance. Pakistani Fulbrighters are studying at universities all over the United States.

### Application Process

For more information on eligibility and to download an application form, visit [www.usefp.org](http://www.usefp.org). Complete application with all the required documents must be submitted online. Paper applications will not be considered.

Applicants from underserved communities and/or with diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.

### Eligibility

- Pakistani citizens with strong academic histories, residing (throughout the scholarship process) in Pakistan and committed to returning to and serving Pakistan, are welcome to apply.
- All disciplines are eligible except clinical medicine. People in the fields of energy, water, agriculture, health, education, environment, and climate change are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Eligible Master's applicants will have a four-year Bachelor's degree or a Bachelor's and Master's combination (16 years of formal education) and PhD applicants will have a Master's, M.Phil., or a comparable degree (18 years of formal education) from an accredited university.
- The Graduate Record Examination (GRE) is required for all applicants.
- The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) will be required for all the selected candidates.
- Applicants should be prepared to complete grants without accompanying dependents, if need be.

Plagiarism, fraudulent publications, or other misrepresentation will lead to disqualification at any stage of the program. The use of generative artificial intelligence software to write Fulbright application essays is prohibited.

**DEADLINE  
March 5, 2025**



## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS COMSTech AWARDS 2025

### Life-Time contributions in 'BIOLOGY' and 'CHEMISTRY'

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTech) announces awards intended to encourage and support scientific contributions in basic sciences. COMSTech will offer awards in the fields of **Biology** and **Chemistry** during the forthcoming Session of COMSTech General Assembly. Each award consists of a certificate, shield of honour, and cash prize of US\$ 8000.

### COMSTech Awards for Excellence in Science & Technology

#### COMSTech Young Researcher Award

- Under the age of 40 years by March 31, 2025.

#### Best Scientific Book

- Published by an International Publisher during 2023-2024

#### Patent

- The award recognizes individuals for their outstanding contributions to their respective field for discovery that has had lasting impact in furthering the theory and/or development of commercial systems
- Only those patents registered during the past five years would be considered
- Each of the above three awards carries a certificate, shield of honour, and cash prize of US\$ 4,000.

#### Best Research Paper

#### 1. Biology 2. Chemistry 3. Mathematics 4. Physics

- Based on original Research. Review paper is not acceptable.
- Published in Impact Factor International Journal during 2023-2024
- The above award in each discipline carries a certificate, shield of honour, and cash prize of US\$ 2,500.

### COMSTech Award for Excellence in Science Communication

This award is being announced for the first time. It is awarded to individuals and institutions in OIC countries engaged in impactful science communication and outreach activities. Outstanding contributions to science communication in academia, journalism, outreach and film making will be recognized. The award carries a certificate, shield of honour, and cash prize of US\$ 2,500.

### Important:

Nominations for the COMSTech Awards 2025 are invited from science academies, national research councils, universities, research institutions, and internationally distinguished scientists who are citizens of, and working in, OIC member states. Nominations will be judged by the panels of distinguished scientists/experts in relevant field appointed by Coordinator General COMSTech.

A signed cover letter by the nominating agency/applicant along with softcopies of the relevant nomination papers be sent to COMSTech Secretariat ([awards@comstech.org](mailto:awards@comstech.org)). Nominations should clearly state the contributions made in the field for which the prize would be given. The nominations must be submitted in the English language and English translation of the related documents must be accompanied along with the following documents.

- Complete application form with signatures
- CV (no longer than 4000 words)
- List of Publications
- Endorsement letter from the Head of Institution

Application forms can be downloaded from our website ([www.comstech.org](http://www.comstech.org)). The closing date of receipt of the applications is **Monday, March 31, 2025**. Applications received after the closing date shall not be entertained. For enquiries, please contact [awards@comstech.org](mailto:awards@comstech.org)

## ELC ORGANIZES TWO TECHNICAL SESSIONS



The Engro Learning Center at UAF organized two technical sessions on "Water-Soluble Fertilizers: Issues and Opportunities" and "Capacity Building on Scientific Writing". Director Institute of Soil & Environmental Sciences Prof. Dr. Zahir. A. Zahir, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The session brought together experts from the Institute of Soil & Env. Science UAF, Soil Bacteriology & Soil Chemistry, Ayub Agricultural Research Institute Faisalabad. The session was organized aiming at fostering a collaborative learning environment. Dr. Abid Niaz (Principal Scientist) and Prof. (Rtd) Dr. Muhammad Yaseen shared their valuable insights on water-soluble fertilizers, benefiting scientists, researchers,

and staff. Prof. Dr. Abdul Wakeel led the second session, providing hands-on training in scientific writing. Participants and resource persons appreciated the efforts of the Engro Learning Center in organizing these valuable sessions, fostering engagement within the scientific community. The event was enriched by the presence of researchers, scientists, postgraduate scholars, and the Agronomy Department team, who actively participated in the discussions. Engro learning centre continues to lead in facilitating knowledge-sharing initiatives, aiming to empower the agricultural community with innovative solutions for a brighter, sustainable future.

### Continued from page # 6

ORIC has revamped its links with sponsoring agencies and private sector by sensitizing faculty for hunting maximum funding from the sponsoring agencies while an exclusive UAF first official company "Agri. Connect Innovations Pvt. Ltd" has been registered to facilitate Faculty Startups for promoting entrepreneurial activities in the campus. This milestone underscores our dedication to fostering entrepreneurship and innovation at an institutional level. The UAF company is an evidence of our ability to translate research into commercially viable solutions. It symbolizes a leap forward in our pursuit of institutional self-reliance and contribution to national economic development.

Technology Innovation Support Center and Student/Faculty Startup at ORIC and First Agri. Tech. Park with a mandate to promote the knowledge based Entrepreneurial Eco-system by Special Technology Zone Authority (STZA), Govt. of Pakistan have opened new vista of research commercialization. The Agri. Tech. Park will provide Institutional and legislative support for the technology sector by providing fiscal and for incentives under STZA Act 2021. This initiative will also attract foreign investors, incentivise fortuitist entrepreneurs and will be a mean of job creation, commercialization and technological knowledge at large. The ORIC-UAF monitors (financial and research activities) and facilitates the talented & meritorious HEC scholars having PhD Indigenous Scholarships as well as HEC Approved PhD Supervisors. Now the number of HEC approved PhD supervisors has exceeded who are providing guidelines to the PhD scholars and contributing in terms of financial resources in the research portfolio of the University. The ORIC is fully aware that for promoting exports of Pakistan, we have to follow International Featured Standards (IFS) and for this purpose Institutional Biosafety Committee / Institutional Bioethics Committee (IBC) organized capacity building workshops, organized Online lab safety/ biosafety course and resultantly during the year, a total of 175 cases were processed by IBC which is the indication of boosting awareness among the

faculty and post graduate students. Now 24 NBC licenses are on the credit of UAF for initiating transgenic work. The ORIC takes care of university rankings by sharing data with various ranking agencies to place UAF in the comity of the nation by placing this Institute of Higher Learning at its deserving place. QS World Universities Ranking has placed UAF (49th position in the World and 9th in Asia in the Subject Category Agri & Forestry). The Central Hi-Tech Lab. (ISO Certified 9001; 2015) equipped with highly sophisticated instruments is extending its sample analysis services to researchers from UAF & other organizations on subsidized rates. The staff at this lab is also providing customized hands-on-training on different instruments round the year. During the year 2024, nine (09) Labs were entered in the commercialization stream of the university. Academia Industry Linkages has entered into a new domain through Consultancy projects and Academia Industry Linkages Projects. ORIC is also member of various committees of Faisalabad Chamber & Commerce & Industry. As we look to the future, our resolve to elevate the research and innovation landscape remains steadfast. The upcoming year will bring renewed efforts to strengthen our research infrastructure, attract more funding opportunities, and foster collaborations that resonate globally. We aim to expand our outreach initiatives and further engage with stakeholders to ensure that our research benefits society at large.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all members of the ORIC family and our partners for their unwavering support and contributions. Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones, and I am confident that the future holds an even greater promise. Let us continue to strive for excellence, innovate with purpose, and make a meaningful impact on the world around us.

The ORIC appreciates and thanks the excellent teamwork and ownership of the faculty because nothing was possible without their sheer cooperation. Thank you and keep it up.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad, Director ORIC, Chief Editor

## THE YEAR END NOTE 2024 AND SEASON'S GREETING, 2025

Dear Faculty Members and UAF Management, Happy New Year and Season's Greeting!

As we bid farewell to another remarkable year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the strides we have made together at the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC). This year has been a testament to our shared commitment to fostering a culture of research excellence, innovation, and impactful collaboration. Our achievements in 2024 reflect the relentless dedication of our faculty, researchers, students, and industry partners. ORIC has continued to serve as a hub for cutting-edge research and facilitating meaningful partnerships. We have seen a surge in funded research projects, a testament to the trust placed in our institution by national and international funding agencies. From groundbreaking studies addressing global challenges such as climate change, healthcare, and food security to innovations in artificial intelligence and sustainable energy, our researchers have continued to push boundaries and inspire change.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of Pakistan under Environment Protection Agency (EPA), Islamabad has approved and recommended for commercialization two varieties of Genetically Modified sugarcane including Insect-resistant transgenic sugarcane (CABB-IRS) and Herbicide-tolerant transgenic sugarcane (CABB-HTS) developed by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan, Vice Chancellor UAF. It is worth mentioning that first GM borer-resistant sugarcane variety was approved for commercial cultivation in Brazil, and it is saving 1.52 billion US dollars annually since it has covered 15% area under its cultivation. The ADB grant includes "Speed Breeding" facility establishment, AWD technology adoption, rice straw management, and farm machinery workshop establishment in collaboration with IRRI, Philippine. UAF varieties with superior traits are second in the world, and first in Pakistan that are approved for commercial cultivation across Pakistan.

Recently, the Variety Evaluation Committee (VEC), Plant



Sciences Division at Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) has given formal approval to one wheat and two Quinoa varieties of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad and recommended them for irrigated & rain-fed areas of the country. The wheat variety Chenab Pasta-24 was jointly submitted by MNS Agri University Multan and University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, whereas, Quinoa (Chenopodium quinoa Wild) UAF-QS and UAF-Q29 were submitted by UAF.

The ORIC values unflinching resolution and untiring efforts of vibrant and competent faculty, that enabled ORIC - UAF to secure Top Position for the 2nd time (consecutively) among all the HEC recognized ORICs in universities/degree awarding institutes across the country and ensured additional 15% overhead (as performance overhead) from HEC funded projects for this institute of higher learning. The number of hunted grants and submitted projects was very encouraging and booming. Thirty two postgraduate students were awarded Partial Research Support on competitive basis, opened new avenues of quality research in the varsity, and due to research publications at national and international level an environment of competitiveness was created. The ORIC has also facilitated scientists by reimbursing publication charges and by making payments for filing of 40 patents/trademark/variety registration cases. ORIC organized 37 seminars/ webinars/ training workshops/symposia/conference and under the collaboration with CABI & HEC completed various training courses by capacitating faculty members and postgraduate students enabling them to harvest facility of CABI digital resources.

On the innovation front, we have amplified our support for startups and entrepreneurial ventures. Through various incubation programs and IP awareness workshops, we have equipped our aspiring entrepreneurs with tools and resources to succeed in a competitive landscape. The establishment of initiatives such as HBL Zari Dera in collaboration with our university exemplifies our commitment to fostering innovative solutions for the agriculture sector. These platforms demonstrate the power of academic-industry synergies in addressing pressing societal needs. **Continue on Page # 5**

### Patron in Chief:

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sarwar Khan  
Vice Chancellor

THE  
EDITORIAL  
PANEL

### Chief Editor:

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Imran Arshad  
Director, ORIC

### Editorial Board:

Dr. Abdul Rashid, Associate Prof (Editor)

Prof. Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad, (Director BIC)

Dr. Khuram Zia, Assistant Prof.

Ms. Aisha Arshad, Assistant Prof.

Muhammad Hanif Ch., Admin Officer



University of Agriculture  
Faisalabad - Pakistan

Sustainable Agriculture Through  
Learning | Discovery | Outreach  
<http://www.uaf.edu.pk>

**ORIC** OFFICE OF RESEARCH,  
**INNOVATION**  
& COMMERCIALIZATION

Transforming Concepts into Impacts

+92419200183, +92419200997

[oric@uaf.edu.pk](mailto:oric@uaf.edu.pk)

[www.facebook.com/oric](http://www.facebook.com/oric)