



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Team Europe Launches New Programmes to Strengthen Skills and Energy in Gilgit Baltistan**

Gilgit, May 29, 2024: The European Union (EU) has launched two flagship programmes to promote skills and clean energy in Gilgit Baltistan.

Through its youth skill development programme, the EU and the Government of Germany have joined forces to transform the vocational training landscape in Gilgit Baltistan. This program provides dedicated support to selected Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) schools across the region, resulting in i) better equipped TVET schools, ii) better trained staff, and iii) curricula more aligned with labor market demands. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, together with the British Council, is implementing this programme.

Under the EU-funded Energy Plus programme, rural communities in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral will gain improved access to clean energy. The programme aims to promote a sustainable transition to renewable energy through investments in energy generation, transmission and distribution. It will also foster energy-efficiency to stimulate private sector-led growth, involving local government and civil society. A total of 350,000 beneficiaries are expected to benefit through this strategic partnership between the EU and its implementing partner, Aga Khan Foundation.

The launch event took place at Gilgit Serena in the presence of the Honourable Chief Minister, Haji Gulbar Khan, the EU Ambassador to Pakistan H.E. Dr. Riina Kionka, Head of Development Cooperation- Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Sebastian Paust and the CEO of Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan, Mr. Akhtar Iqbal.

The Honourable Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan thanked the European Union and German government for their support and shared, “The skills development and clean green energy initiative will play a pivotal role in socio economic development of the region. Gilgit-Baltistan has a unique geographical location with certain opportunities and challenges. We are sure, that these projects will contribute towards development of the region. He assured the government’s support and resolve to make both these projects a success which emanates from the highest level of authority within GB in the interest of people of the region.”



Expressing Team Europe's strong support for the people of Gilgit Baltistan, Dr Riina Kionka, the Ambassador of European Union to Pakistan stated, "These initiatives are not just about development; they are about empowering people and communities in Gilgit-Baltistan. The Energy Plus programme will transform rural communities through innovative, clean and renewable solutions, while the TVET initiative will unlock opportunities and empower individuals in Gilgit-Baltistan to build a brighter future especially for women."

Speaking at the occasion Dr. Sebastian Paust, Head of Development Cooperation at German Embassy Islamabad said, "We are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind. These initiatives will create pathways for everyone in Gilgit-Baltistan to contribute to and benefit from the region's economic growth".

The two new programmes are part of a broader Team Europe Initiative, bringing together the combined strengths of the EU, France, Germany, and Italy to "*build back better through green jobs creation.*" They also contribute to the EU's Global Gateway Initiative, the EU's largest investment programme designed to tackle the most pressing global challenges, from fighting climate change to improving health systems and boosting the competitiveness and security of global supply chains.

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