



## Roses for Nangarhar

(second phase 10/2007 – 08/2008)

### Introduction:

At the end of 2001, the coordinator of foreign projects at the German cosmetics company WALA (Bad Boll) approached Welthungerhilfe Afghanistan Desk in Bonn and suggested cultivating oil-roses in Afghanistan as an alternative to the increasing poppy cultivation. The request was based on experiences in Kerman (Iran) where farmers had created sustainable livelihoods by cultivating approximately 2,000 ha oil-roses instead of poppy. The idea was quickly taken up by Welthungerhilfe and transformed into a feasibility study. Two years later the project proposal 'Roses for Nangarhar' was finalized.

Among the 10,000 varieties of roses, which have been identified, the rose damascene is the most versatile and highly prized with regard to oil production. It is widely cultivated as a medical plant, used internally and externally in a wide range of applications, as well as for perfumery and beauty products.



In Bulgaria the *rosa damascena (trigintipentale)* has been cultivated for more than 300 years in the Kazanluk Valley. It developed into an independent variety, differing in its anatomy and physiology from other roses, even from the original variety in Kashan/Iran.

So far, the 'Roses for Nangarhar' project has cultivated 32 ha of rose damascene with saplings imported from Bulgaria. Last year the first Afghanistan grown saplings were cultivated on additional 10 ha. The oil rose has proven its adaptability to the local conditions, agronomical as well as socio-economically.

Most of the saplings are growing at an altitude of 1,000-1,500m. The rose needs intensive sunshine in its growth stage and cold, fresh nights to create the exquisite scent. The rose petals have to be harvested in the early morning. Then the perfume is at its most intense. The harvested roses must be delivered to the distillery within an hour of harvesting to prevent deterioration and loss of their volatile elements. Genuine distilled rose oil is extremely valuable requiring 4,000 to 5,000 kg of rose petals to produce 1 kg of rose oil. This Afghan rose oil is steam distilled and free of any solvents and adulterants.



### Project Objective

The project objectives are to create sustainable and legal foundations for improved rural livelihoods and to increase legal income generating options for farmers in Nangarhar Province; and furthermore to transfer ownership of the project to a national organisation/company to achieve sustainability.

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The 'Roses for Nangarhar' project provides a realistic alternative to poppy cultivation for selected farmers in Nangarhar Province. The rose petals are processed into organic rose-oil, rose water and other rose products. Organic rose oil has a high market value on international markets. Furthermore, roses have been a perennial crop in Afghanistan since about 25 years, and rose scent, rose water and rose oil are still part of traditional and daily life in Afghan households. However, the long years of war have limited supply and trade; also their common use yet has to be reanimated to some extent.

**Beneficiaries:** Between 300 small farmers and their families benefit from the programme. They receive nearly 70% of the final selling price of rose oil for the fresh rose flowers.

**Location:** Eastern Afghanistan, Nangarhar Province, selected villages in the districts of Achin, Nazian and Dari Noor.

**Project Period:** October 2007 - August 2008

<b>Financed By:</b>	Co-financed by GTZ-PAL/EC	500,346 €
	Own contribution by Welthungerhilfe	25,000 €
	<b>Total</b>	<b>525,346 €</b>

### Main Project Activities:

- 42 ha are planted with *rose damascene* oil-roses, further increase is aimed at.
- Farmers are trained in organic land use.
- Streamlining production: 3 distilleries for processing rose petals to rose oil and rose water are established. It is aimed at installing a new , more cost effective distillery
- Drying of rose petals and buds for international market
- A marketing structure for high-value organic rose oil and rose water for international and regional markets is established.
- Local rose nursery are founded and supported
- Preparation for a transfer of ownership to national organisation/company

Up to the end of 2007, the pilot project has cultivated 42 ha of roses. Most roses show excellent growth. The results from the first three harvests suggest the development of an exquisite fragrance and the likelihood of high yields in the future. Two distilleries have been established. The second harvest in 2007 has processed obtaining 5.5 litres of rose oil; even better results are expected for the third harvest, which is currently (April 2008) ongoing. Analysis of the rose oil indicates the quality as being Turkish oil but not as high as the Kerman oil from Iran (being the best).

### Challenges:

The biggest challenge of the ongoing project period is the transfer of the project into Afghan ownership. A roadmap for privatisation has been elaborated and will be implemented.

Roses are not an answer to all Afghan poppy-related problems. The sale of rose products operates in a niche economy (global trade 2,000-3,000 kg) but could provide a viable alternative for selected farmers so far making their living based on poppy cultivation. Additionally the processing of roses develops off-farm jobs in remote rural areas.

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