

# SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNANCE



## *Better Systems for Better Services*



Edition 01

# NEWSLETTER

## Our Partners Speak



Sub-National Governance (SNG) works as a key strategic partner with the Planning & Development Board and provides critical support in strengthening the department's core functions.

SNG has supported the P&D Board to put together a framework for developing a comprehensive Planning & Development Reform Strategy. This is the first time that such an extensive exercise is being carried by using the Public Investment Management Assessment (PIMA) Framework. Additionally, the programme has supported the department by developing critical frameworks to inform development planning guidelines and in designing a prioritisation framework to reduce the throw forward and make investments more effective and efficient. The programme also worked at the department level supporting them to develop evidence-based development plans.

Additionally, SNG's support to P&D at the crucial time of COVID-19 was instrumental in getting the Economic Stimulus and Social Protection Plan for the government ready. The experts from SNG in a very short time were able to study various international models, local on-ground realities, and discussed various options before producing a model that resulted in a comprehensive COVID-19 Punjab Government package.

I look forward to a sustained and productive partnership with the Sub-National Governance Programme in Punjab.

### **Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh**

Chairman Planning and Development Board  
Punjab

Chair of the Steering Committee  
Sub-National Governance Programme

# Message

## Provincial Team Lead, SNG

Sub-National Governance (SNG) is a Department of International Development (DFID) funded technical assistance Programme that is supporting the Government of Punjab in carrying out planning, public financial management (PFM) and governance reforms. The primary objective of the Programme is to help the government in improving service delivery to the citizens and to achieve this objective, the Programme supports such reforms areas that would lead to "Better Systems for Better Services".

It is tough times as the entire world is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and Punjab and Pakistan stand vulnerable in the wake of this unprecedented outbreak. The Sub-National Governance Programme immediately stepped in to support the Planning & Development Board, Government of Punjab in formulating an Economic Recovery and Stabilisation Plan to support the economy in these difficult times. In addition, it also led the formulation of a Social Protection Plan that aims to provide immediate relief to laid-off workers, daily wagers and the most vulnerable segments of society who lost their livelihoods as a result of the economic slow-down.

SNG is providing technical assistance to departments of P&D, Finance, ET&ND, LG&CD and PRA. With the help of these departments, such high-impact strategic reforms have been identified that would result in transformational change in the working of these departments. In order to supplement these reforms, SNG's Innovation and Action Research stream has launched our first round of Innovation Challenge Fund (ICF) aptly named Justajoo- which means "to strive" in Urdu. Under this first

round, the programme will be funding innovative pilots in the areas of public financial management and fiscal space. We are also looking to fund ideas that might have solutions for preparing public financial management systems when a pandemic like COVID-19 strikes.

The newsletter shares some of our work and key interventions from Jan to March 2020. We look forward to doing bigger and better work in the future to ensure a brighter future for people of the province and the country.



**Usman Chaudhry**

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Strategic Communication for governance reforms is key to building consensus around interventions. Communication links all stakeholders to ensure successful and sustained reforms and engagement through correct messaging is what makes all the difference in the public sphere.

With a burgeoning population, Pakistan needs massive public sector reforms to strengthen its planning, governance, public financing systems and the effectiveness of the ways it collects its revenue. A reform agenda championed from the top leadership makes the reform impactful and effective. All interventions of the Sub-National Governance Programme work towards improving systems that would lead to improved services for citizens. Through various activities, SNG engages all stakeholders and partners who play a key role as reform champions. The programme also engages with citizens- women, youth and the civil society for whom improved service delivery means a better quality of life.

This newsletter is an attempt to apprise our partners of some of the work that we do in the areas of planning, public financial management & fiscal space, innovation and inclusion.

Feedback and contributions are welcome at [gulalai.khan@pk-sng.org](mailto:gulalai.khan@pk-sng.org)

**Gulalai Khan**

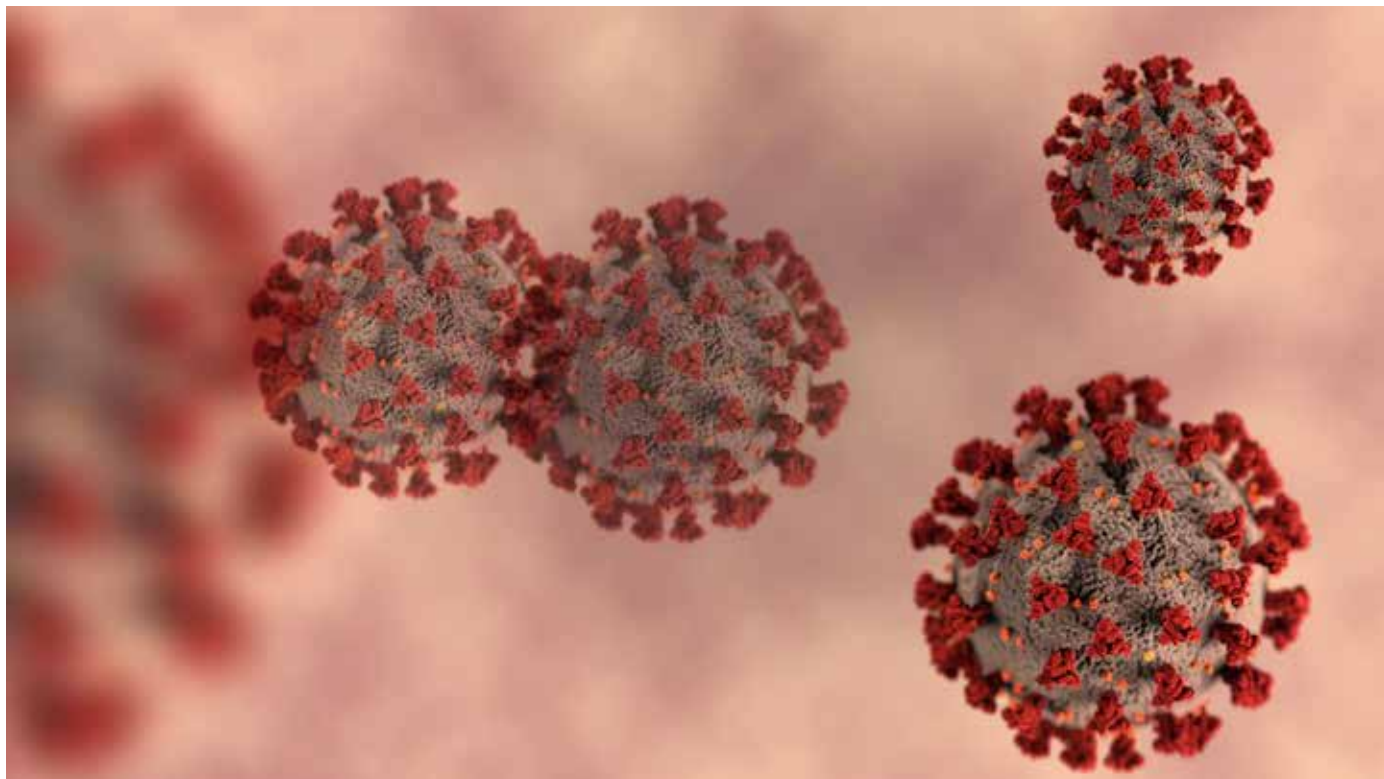
Communication and Social Impact Advisor SNG

# Sub-National Governance Supports Punjab Government on COVID-19 Plan

COVID-19 has emerged as the biggest humanitarian and economic calamity that has hit countries all over the world. In the global south particularly, with weak healthcare infrastructure, lack of social security coverage and a major chunk of the population living beneath the poverty line, COVID-19 is proving to be more than just a health catastrophe.

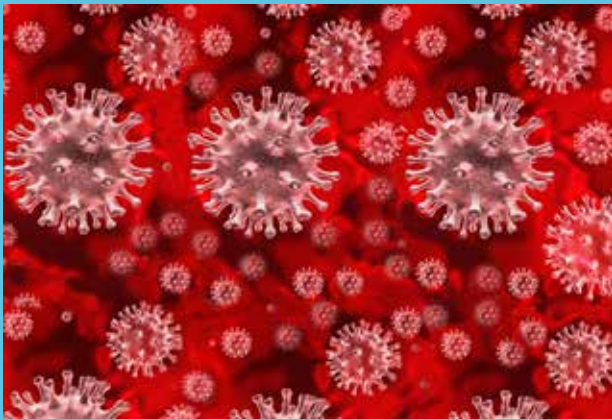
Sub-National Governance (SNG) Programme Punjab, supported the Government of Punjab to devise an Economic Recovery and Stabilisation Plan to deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was crucial support as the government required financial management and economic experts to devise health management, economic stimulus and social protection plans in the wake of this pandemic.

SNG and DFID experts became part of two working groups constituted by the Planning and Development Board Punjab to formulate the Economic Stimulus Plan as well as the Social Protection Plan for the province of Punjab. Both the Working Groups formulated recommendations that have been approved by the Government of the Punjab on March 28, 2020. As a result, Government of the Punjab was able to announce a comprehensive package of Rs. 140 Billion to counter the economic and humanitarian impact of this pandemic.



The experts also formulated recommendations on taxation, exports and supply chain management for the Federal Government that were incorporated in the Prime Minister's COVID-19 package announced on the 24th of March.

The SNG team is also holding weekly consultations with the chambers of commerce & industries, business associations and the private sector through the Punjab Economic Research Institute to assess the difficulties faced by businesses and identifying areas of future policy action and support.



**The PKR 140 billion Economic Package will help cope with the crisis and provide social welfare coverage to more than 2.5 million families who will suffer badly as a result of COVID-19.**

DFID's support to the Punjab Government on the COVID-19 Package has been a significant exercise as it is helping the federal, as well as provincial governments, identify policy actions to provide the necessary stimulus to the economy. Going forward, SNG team is supporting the P&D Department to realign its development priorities so that the public spending could be diverted to such sectors that may provide support to the economy. Similarly, Finance Department is being supported in its efforts to work out additional fiscal space that has become extremely crucial for the government in the current situation.

# Launch of SNG's Innovation Challenge Fund and Action Research

SNG has launched the first round of its Innovation Challenge Fund and Action Research (ICF&AR). The main aim of the Challenge Fund, named Justajoo (to strive), is to fund innovative pilots that will support areas such as public financial management, planning, revenue mobilisation, delivery of municipal services, accountability and transparency.

ICF captures interventions that may not be possible through standard technical assistance to the government as it requires additional financial and/or thinking space. The fund provides an opportunity and incentive for public and private actors (including non-governmental organizations, academia, think-tanks, technology experts and privately owned businesses) to demonstrate new and effective ways in which the government can improve its planning, execution, budgeting, financial management, revenue mobilisation and operations of local governments.

The first round of ICF will cover the areas of Public Financial Management (PFM) and fiscal space as well as ideas relating to preparing planning and PFM systems for pandemics like COVID-19. The maximum project duration allowed is 18 months, with an ideal project duration of 12 months.



# SNG AT A GLANCE

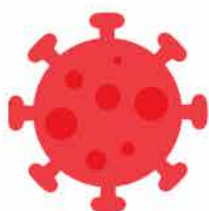
## Jan-Mar 2020

200



YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS ENGAGED  
FOR ICF

140



BILLION PKR COVID-19 ECONOMIC  
PLAN



18

WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS  
TRAINED IN PLANNING &  
BUDGETING



07

INNOVATIVE IDEAS IDENTIFIED IN  
HACKATHON

95



STAKEHOLDERS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY  
& INCLUSION ENGAGED



13

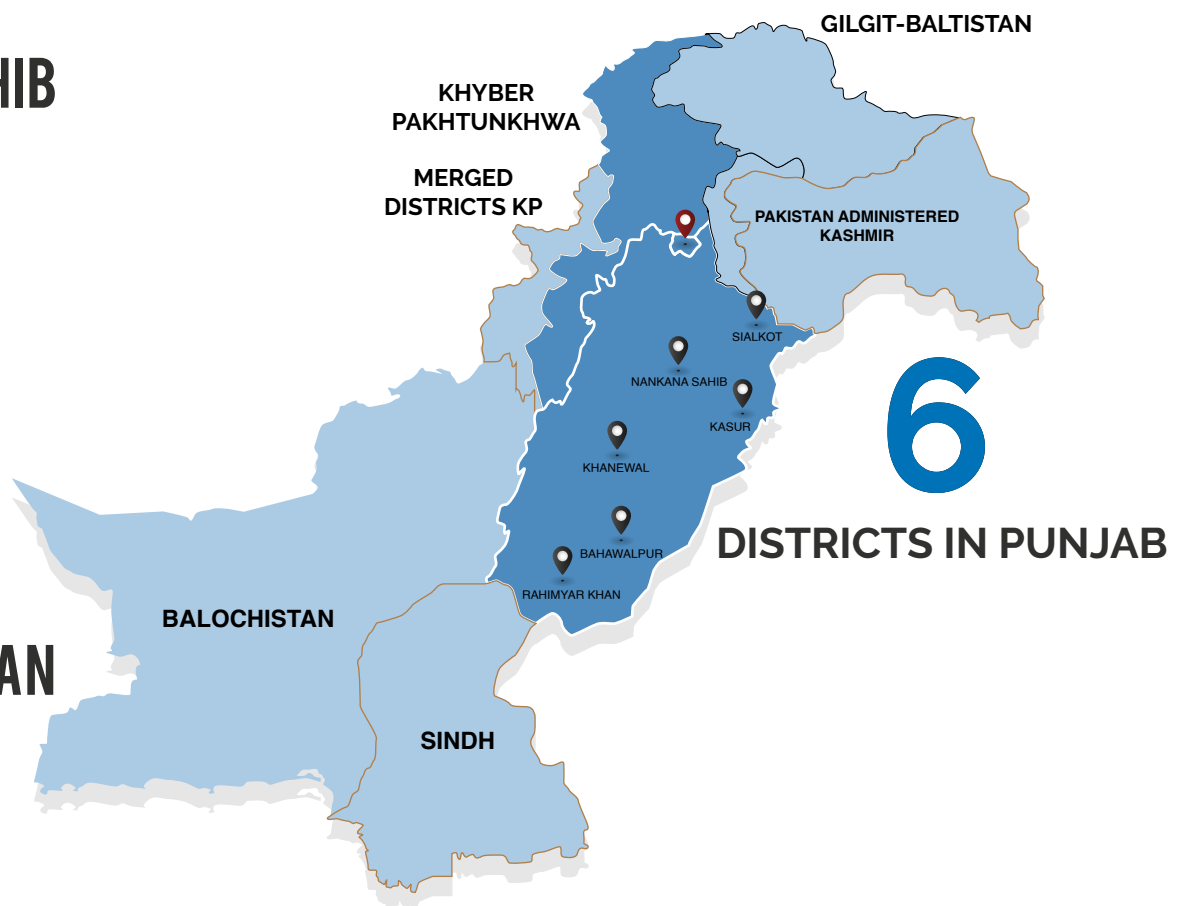
STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS CREATED



# Focus Districts for Local Government Reforms

**NORTH**  
NANKANA SAHIB  
KASUR  
SIALKOT

**SOUTH**  
BAHAWALPUR  
RAHIMYARKHAN  
MULTAN



# Idea Hackathon at LUMS

## Chairman P&D chairs concluding session of Sub-National Governance Programme's Idea Hackathon

SNG held an Idea Hackathon in partnership with Technology for People Initiative (TPI) at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). The event was well attended by public sector partners, development experts, technology and idea incubation experts and solution providers. The groups were structured in six teams and over an intense working period of two days were able to develop very specific and costed design solutions to problems. These included increasing the property tax collection in Punjab, integrating different databases of the government to increase the tax base, enhancing the use of PIFRA data and developing an automated budget and execution analysis reports and dashboards, e-procurement system for Punjab and solutions to smog and climate change issues.

The specific ideas were presented to Mr. Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh, Chairman P&D, Mr. Umer Mukhtar Khan, Governance Advisor DFID, Mr. Shahid Hussain, Rector LUMS, Mr. Wajihullah Kundi, Secretary Excise and Taxation Punjab and Dr. Abid Bodla, Member Climate Change P&D at the conclusion. The most important part of the activity was to bring the public sector in close contact with different types of technical and area experts to break down complex problems before discussing solutions based on innovation and scalability.

On the occasion Chairman P&D remarked that innovation to improve systems of planning and finance automatically translates into better service delivery for the people and the idea Hackathon is a good way to explore ideas that will help the government systems get better. He also appreciated the fact that a good mix of experts work on breaking down the problem before identifying solutions as it provides an in-depth situation analysis and better solutions.





# SNG conducts Training on Planning and Budgetary Cycle for Women Parliamentarians



On the request of women MPAs from Punjab, the SNG team held a training workshop for Women Parliamentarians on budgeting and planning. The objective of this workshop was to help build the capacity of women parliamentarians so that they are better able to contribute in the forthcoming budget session of Punjab Assembly. It provided women MPAs with a basic understanding of resource allocation, budgeting and planning cycles and gender-responsive budgeting as well as to reiterate their role and its importance as members of the Provincial Assembly. Several women MPAs were present including Chairperson Gender Mainstreaming Committee of the Punjab Assembly, Ms Uzma Kardar.



The training was divided in three components. The first segment focused on a discussion on budget cycle and its related timelines.

The second segment aimed at understanding the planning framework in Punjab. It went over the concept of development planning, ADP formulation, objective setting, the Global Goals Agenda of 2030 i.e. Sustainable Development Goals and development instruments in the province.

The third part of the training shed light on the role of women MPAs by highlighting women's contribution to politics and development and the value women in politics bring to service delivery.



*“As a first-time legislature, I had very little knowledge of how the government works. Planning and Budgeting are technical areas and women members of the assembly usually stay quiet during these discussions. After this training I feel confident and knowledgeable enough to be able to do my work better. Also, now we know what the crucial dates and timelines for the annual development programme are thus making planning our work easier”;*

**Talat Naqvi, Member of Provincial Assembly Punjab**

*‘Usually when male policy makers and leaders plan for us, they do not understand what really matters to us. The gender lens is missing from planning and resource allocation. Most importantly, we are kept away from the planning and budgeting process which makes us struggle for our individual schemes that we want to include. Not only was this event a good morale boosting session with women coming together to find innovative solutions but I also took this opportunity to request SNG for a training on planning and budgeting for women parliamentarians. This is an opportune time, as our pre-budget discussions have already started in the Punjab Assembly’;*

**Sabrina Javed Member of the Punjab Provincial Assembly.**



# SNG Develops Budget Strategy Paper for Government of Punjab



SNG developed a draft Budget Strategy Paper (BSP) 2020-23 for the Government of Punjab to help strengthen policy-based, top-down budgeting in the province. BSP is an instrument used in modern budgeting to help establish budget priorities through a consultative process. The draft paper prepared by the PFM team of SNG includes a discussion on macroeconomic context, revenue projections for the Government in the medium term, budget priorities suggested in the light of objectives set in the Punjab Growth Strategy and budget ceilings for line departments. In this way BSP aids in systematically conveying the government's priorities to departments at the start of the budget cycle hence, making the budget formulation process more transparent and participatory.

One section of the BSP is the medium-term fiscal framework (MTFF). The MTFF takes into account projections of divisible pool transfers to Punjab, provincial tax revenue, non-tax revenue, financing from the capital account to come up with an estimate of the resource envelope for the Government. It further makes projections of recurrent and development expenditure in the medium term.



The BSP is a move towards strengthening policy-based budgeting in Punjab and SNG will continue this support in the next budget cycle as well for budget strengthening in the province.

# Public Financial Management Reform Strategy for Punjab

**T**hrough its various interventions, SNG aims at make budgeting more robust and transparent, as such that spending better reflects budgets. There was a need for a policy-based fiscal strategy and budgeting, hence SNG developed a Public Financial Management Reform Strategy (PFMRS).

The strategy was guided by Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) 2019 and the results framework for the strategy is based on seven pillars, 28 result areas and actions. The seven pillars include revenue mobilisation to finance services, improved quality of budgeting, fiscal risks and budget execution, reformed development budget systems, improvement of the management of funds in LGs, improved legal and regulatory framework and capacity enhancement for better PFM.

The strategy was reviewed by respective departments, Quality Assurance experts and World Bank (WB) experts. These reforms aim to serve as the basis of the \$300 million WB programme on PFM and revenue mobilisation reforms.



# Gender Mainstreaming Underpinning all Development Interventions

The Innovation Challenge Fund and Action Research team of the SNG held an introductory session with a cross-section of stakeholders for innovative ideas on accountability, inclusion and gender mainstreaming.

SNG partnered with the Standing Committee of the Punjab Assembly on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment for this session at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Lahore. The Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Ms. Uzma Kardar chaired the session with participants from the public sector, corporate sector, tech entrepreneurs and civil society. Women parliamentarians of the Punjab Assembly were also a part of the engagement session.

The participants were introduced to the Innovation Challenge Fund as well as the areas of the different rounds. The intent was to pilot critical and innovative ideas and then based on the results, work with the government and other partners to scale-up for broader impact. The women participants showed a great deal of enthusiasm in discussing prospective ideas that could lead to gender mainstreaming in planning, budgeting and the way governments formulate public policy.



## Our Partners Speak



The government of Punjab has gender mainstreaming and women empowerment at the top of its priority list. With the support of development partners like DFID and programmes like the Sub-National Governance the agenda of inclusive development and policymaking will be successfully achieved, InshAllah

I had the pleasure of interacting with the experts of SNG at the introductory session of the Innovation Challenge Fund's gender mainstreaming component. The grants will definitely lead to good ideas and scalable projects

I would take this opportunity to especially appreciate the support that the SNG team provided in partnering with the gender mainstreaming committee of the Punjab Government to train women parliamentarians in planning and budgeting. The training was very effective as most of these women were first-time parliamentarians and it helped them understand the minute details of planning and budgeting which will ensure their effective participation in the development and budget-making process.

I look forward to working with the Sub-National Governance Programme in the future on issues of women empowerment and inclusion.

### **Uzma Kardar**

Chairperson Standing Committee Gender  
Mainstreaming & Women Development,  
Punjab Assembly

Official Media Spokesperson for Government  
of Punjab

# Engaging Youth for Innovative Solutions

## Sub- National Governance holds session with youth and technology entrepreneurs

To engage youth and technology entrepreneurs, the Sub-National Governance Programme held an introductory session with young people for its Innovation Challenge Fund and Action Research at the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB).

More than 200 start-up incubators personnel, tech entrepreneurs, govt representatives, faculty Information Technology University and young students attended the session.

In his welcome note, Mr. Salman Amin, Director Entrepreneurship of PITB's Plan 9 Incubator said that the Government of Punjab has supported new ideas, especially those of young entrepreneurs. The Innovation Challenge Fund, he added, is an ideal opportunity for young people with ideas that can help in planning, public financial management, increasing fiscal space and inclusion, transparency and accountability.

Usman Khan, lead SNG Innovation Challenge Fund while introducing the program said that SNG, through a very transparent process of application, selection and grant management will offer grants to successful applicants for piloting their projects which the government can later scale up for higher impact.

Sajid Latif, Director General PITB on the occasion commented that the government is investing in tech-based solutions to improve services for the public and is partnering with development agencies like DFID and the private sector to invest in good and innovative ideas.





# Roundtable with Literacy Department to inform Punjab Literacy Policy

SNG facilitated a roundtable consultation led by the Government of Punjab in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Lahore to inform the Punjab Literacy Policy.

The main objective of the consultation was to explore ways of linking non-formal literacy and provision of skills so that more children could be attracted to and retained in the literacy centres. Additionally, it aimed at maximizing children's life chances by imparting literacy and skills through productive collaboration among relevant entities as well as explore opportunities for quality curriculum and teacher training. The roundtable generated a policy discourse on government—civil society collaboration and the introduction of workable ideas that could be developed into ADP projects.

The consultation also highlighted the need to identify relevant skills that match market demands to ensure effective integration of literacy with skills. It was decided that proposals should be forwarded to relevant authorities for designing the curriculum in primary and secondary schools in a way that allows and facilitates honing of such skills.

The initiative brought together representatives from organizations such as Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), UNICEF, School Education Department (Punjab), Punjab Social Protection Authority, Hunar Foundation, Punjab Vocational Training Council, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi, Fisheries Department (Punjab), The Urban Unit (Punjab), Punjab Rural Support Programme (PRSP), Livestock and Dairy Development Department (Punjab), Agriculture Department, Allama Iqbal Open University, Punjab Small Industries Corporation and Planning and Development Department were present at the consultation

**The Punjab Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) Policy was launched by Punjab Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Social Welfare on March 5th, 2020.**



# Roundtable for Developing ADP Strategy for Industries, Commerce, Investment & Skills (ICI&SD)

## Minister Finance and Minister Industries Punjab Chair Session

The ICI&SD Department plays a critical role in generating economic growth in the province and is the department that has a substantial mandate for private sector development and investment promotion. Despite having this critical role, historically, the department always prepared its Annual Development Plan (ADP) based on a 10% increase to resource envelope.



SNG team led by the Innovation Advisor conducted two roundtables to bring in a strategic approach towards developing the next year's ADP. The first session included internal stakeholders comprising representatives of industrial estate development companies, small industries corporation, technical and vocational training and Punjab Board of Trade and Investment. The roundtable used a strategic problem-driven presentation to identify and prioritise key interventions under the next year's development budget.



**Another roundtable was held with industry representatives (private sector) and was chaired by Minister for Industries, Mian Aslam Iqbal and Finance Minister, Hashim Jawan Bakht.**

SNG presented the strategic approach and interventions to these external stakeholders. The input from both sessions helped in developing an evidence-based and informed plan targeting key growth triggers for the province.

# Operationalising the New Local Government System

The Sub-National Governance Programme developed eleven sets of rules along with other documents to operationalise Punjab Local Government Act (PLGA), 2019. Local Planning Boards have already been notified by the LG&CD Department under section 257 of PLGA 2019. SNG also supported preparation of the Code of Conduct for Councillors as well as Rules for Conflict of Interest have also been developed. The Rules of Business provided the structure of the Local Governments (LG), clear cut instructions on how to run offices and the level of autonomy for the head of LG and the Chief & Municipal officer. Similarly, SNG is also preparing LG Planning Guidelines and LG Planning Manual. Both these documents are strategic documents that would guide newly formed local governments on the development planning and execution of development schemes. Under the PLGA 2019, a new institution "Inspectorate of Inspections & Monitoring of Local Governments" is also to be established and SNG supported the department in preparation of the design and organisation structure along with Rules for establishing the said institution.

## Development of Planning Compendium for Planning & Development Board

To provide Planning and Development (P&D) Board with support on the Annual Development Programme, a planning compendium was introduced by the Sub-National Governance Programme. This is a directory for all useful policies, instructions, circulars and notifications on the ADP. This will be accessible to teams working on ADP schemes in various departments and agencies and will be available in print, as well as electronic format. The purpose of developing this compendium was to enhance quality, save review time and build ADP related knowledge base, reinforcing SNG's planning and governance objectives of facilitating evidence-based planning in the government.

# Pension Reforms and Efficiency Savings

SNG held regular consultations with the Finance Department to identify priority areas for efficiency savings. As a result of this, pension reforms emerged as a top priority for the Government. A plan for efficiency savings has been developed and through its initiatives the government is likely to achieve the efficiency savings target. The existing pension policy of the government will be reviewed, and a new scheme will be designed that can help better manage pension liabilities of the Government.

The efficiency savings plan also includes support for improved pension administration through development of an automated system for proof of life of pensioners, completion of pension roll, 100% disbursement of pension through direct credit and pension audits. The other components of the plan include payroll audits, review of subsidies given by the government and a study on resolution of the debt problem in Food Account of the Government.

SNG has also been assisting the Government to review the retirement age for civil servants and early retirement policy. These pension reforms will help the Government of Punjab manage its pension liability better. In the medium to long run, this is likely to result in a significant decrease in pension liability of the Government which will in turn create fiscal space for service delivery to citizens.

## Revenue Mobilisation Plan for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department

The Public Financial Management experts at the Sub-National Governance provided technical assistance to the Excise Department for development of a Revenue Mobilisation Plan that has been approved by the department. The plan envisages establishment of a Strategic Policy Unit (SPU), review of outdated legal frameworks, development of information technology/digitization strategy, building capacity of the human resource, extension of E-pay system to all taxes, reforms on urban immovable property tax, reforms to motor vehicle taxes, strengthening of audit, rationalisation and restructuring of HR and establishment of service centres.

There will be support on implementation of this plan through technical assistance as well as the innovation window of the Sub-National Governance Programme.



# National and Provincial Stakeholder Consultation on Accountability and Inclusion

The Accountability & Inclusion team of SNG held various stakeholder consultations while developing the Citizen Engagement Guidelines. These included 35 consultations with 95 stakeholders from the government, representatives from civil society, donor-funded programs and citizen platforms. During these consultations, participants shared relevant observations and best practices based on their experiences and provided concrete suggestions on developing the Citizen Engagement Guidelines. These Guidelines will provide local government officials and elected representatives with a mechanism to make their planning processes inclusive and based on community needs.

Active collaboration has also been established with the DFID-funded sister program AAWAZ-II and work plans of the two programmes have been aligned to ensure coordination in activities such as support for citizen engagement.

To foster collaborations and coordination, SNG has held multiple meetings with development partners and donor-funded programmes. Additionally, formal collaboration with the Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company (PMDFC) has resulted in development and piloting of a Citizen Engagement Space in PMDFC created websites for Municipal Committee Daska (Sialkot). This space, which will be replicated in other local government websites, provides an online tool to citizens to report concerns as well as identify development priorities.



# Media Snippets

## New DFID head, P&D chairman discuss cooperation, projects

\*Click the Title above to view complete article on <https://nation.com.pk/>

1 month ago



APP



Programme (SNG) which works on Planning and Public Financial Management reforms as well as local government reforms. He said that technical assistance for government planning and finance reforms helped in better strategizing and planning for key development initiatives of the government as well as linking investments to the Punjab growth strategy targets.

Punjab P&D Chairman also appreciated the DFID support especially in partnering with government in reform strategy for P&D and finance as well as building capacity of newly inducted planning officers and making guidelines for local government department.

DFID's Punjab Head Jinal Shah, Governance Advisor Sarah Cooper, Punjab Governance Advisor Omar Mukhtar and Secretary P&D Imran Baloch, Secretary Excise and Taxation and Secretary Local Government were also present.



## Better Systems for Better Services

With a burgeoning population, Pakistan needs massive public sector reforms to manage its planning, governance, public financing systems and the effectiveness of the way it delivers its services. A reform agenda championed from the top leadership makes the reforms not just impactful but also useful for enhancing service delivery to the citizens. In Punjab, with more than 24 percent of the population living below the poverty line, an approximate 28 million people, public financial management systems must be efficient enough to ensure that public service delivery reaches those for whom it matters the most.

Innovation these days is a buzz word, especially with digital technologies cropping in, but traditionally public sector has not been able to grasp innovative approaches as effectively as other sectors. In the Global South, especially due to the cumbersome processes and a massive workload due to inefficient systems, innovation in the public sector has not been explored fully. Punjab has been experimenting with its e-governance agenda for a few years now, however, only a few truly scaled up examples of these innovations, many only worked as prototype solutions and some not scalable beyond a certain level. A recent innovation drive by the Punjab Finance Department in the Punjab E-pay system that has automated payments of 12 services through a simple smartphone application. The scaled-up use of this application in its second phase might have a strategic stress test, nevertheless, it is a good step in the way the government is embracing technological innovations.

The value of innovation, especially in the public financial management systems is immense. When these systems at the central level of the government improve, the services automatically improve and citizens benefit. There has been a lot of dis-

consider on how evidence-based planning and development and public financial management is the only solution for equitable distribution of resources. But how does it work? Is it possible to capacitate all public sector officials for innovation? Is it also possible for governments to fine-tune systems for experimenting with innovative approaches?

This is where development partners come in. Innovation requires both finances and dedicated time, which is usually not available in the public sector who are busy firefighting and managing day-to-day issues. Development partners can offer time, technical expertise and financial space for innova-

**The Sub-National Governance Programme funded by DFID has launched an open innovation grant competition that is inviting innovative ideas to not only support the more traditional issues of public financial management and enhancing taxation but also looking for innovative solutions to manage disaster finance management**

tive pilots that can be later scaled up. When strategic innovations are available on the fiscal side, innovative solutions that can support the capability to manage public finances or increase collection can add substantial value. Punjab has a total monthly budget of close to PKR 2 trillion and collects over 100 million tax

revenues in the form of Rs. 230bn. However, various assessments done by international agencies such as World Bank suggest that there are inefficiencies in spending and budget execution and also substantial tax potential exists which is not collected. For example, the 100 billion potential exists just under property tax collection if coverage is enhanced. Similarly, the Punjab Revenue Authority has identified over 150 taxable services, but the potential collection is still a much lower level. With the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19, stark gaps have appeared for disaster risk financing and distribution of financial resources to those suffering economically. When governments intend to park large sums to support those who have become economically inactive in response to the deficit of finding sustainable, transparent and credible mechanisms to resolve in a clear response.

These are tricky problems and to meaningful solutions exist as with the high degree of informality in the economy (as much as 16 million workers in the informal sector) it becomes very difficult to identify the true beneficiaries. There is a risk to spend significant public money yet not be able to reach the most vulnerable. Innovations and research can add value in identifying both process-based, and technology-supported ideas that can provide credible solutions.

In these challenging times, the Sub-National Governance Programme funded by DFID has launched an open innovation grant competition that is inviting innovative ideas to not only support the more traditional issues of public financial management and enhancing taxation but also looking for innovative solutions to manage disaster finance management. Other agencies and development partners have also come up with research innovation grants to work in partnership with the government for solutions in these critical times.

It is hoped that these innovations will help identify, pilot and scale innovative solutions that will not only bring efficiency in public resource management but also significantly improve the experience of citizens and create improved public service delivery. Better systems, which are efficient, transparent and inclusive, will surely result in better services.

### Consultation on gender mainstreaming

LAHORE: An introductory session of DFID-funded Sub-National Governance (SNG) Programme was held with key stakeholders on gender mainstreaming and inclusion for its Innovation Challenge Fund and Action Research here at the Chief Minister Secretariat.

Uzma Kadir, Chairperson Gender Mainstreaming Standing Committee of Punjab Assembly, chaired the session along with Sarah Adams, Secretary Labour Punjab, Omar Mukhtar, DFID governance adviser, and Uzma Chaudhry, PFI-SNG. Members of Punjab Assembly, representatives from private sector, tech entrepreneurs, government departments and development partners also attended the session.

In her welcome note, Uzma Kadir said the Punjab government had shown immense commitment to gender mainstreaming and with the support of development partners like DFID the agenda could be achieved. She welcomed innovative ideas for inclusion through the SNG Innovation Challenge Fund. Uzma Khan, Lead SNG Innovation said that the programme through a very transparent process of application, selection and grant management would offer grants to successful applicants for piloting their projects which the government can later scale up for higher impact.

Uzma Kadir stated that with the academic, private sector, developmental and governmental funding together and working on innovation for transparency, accountability and inclusion, this will be the agenda of the PFI government and will empower women socially, economically and politically.

### Govt working for political, economic empowerment of women: Uzma Kadir

Uzma Kadir, Chairperson Gender Mainstreaming Standing Committee of Punjab Assembly, said that PFI government was working for social and economic empowerment of women.

Addressing the introductory session of DFID-funded Sub-National Governance Programme, she said that the government of Punjab had shown immense commitment to gender mainstreaming and with the support of development partners like DFID the agenda could be achieved.

The introductory session was held through the Chief Minister Secretariat.

She also welcomed innovative ideas for inclusion through the SNG Innovation Challenge Fund. Uzma Khan, Lead SNG Innovation said that the programme through a very transparent process of application, selection and grant management would offer grants to successful applicants for piloting their projects which the government can later scale up for higher impact.

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## COVID-19 package covers all sectors: minister


National | Our Correspondent | March 29, 2020



The COVID-19 package was designed with consultation from sectoral experts, academics, development partners, DFID, SNG and other key practitioners and experts who took into account all projections and the impact of COVID-19, he added.



SNG Programme is funded by UK Government's Department for International Development, and is managed and implemented by Oxford Policy Management Ltd. The programme works in the provinces of Punjab and KP to improve public service delivery.

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