

Green Growth Initiative of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan

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"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

— Chief Seattle

Accepting the challenge of stewardship of the earth's resources today, to bequeath a more liveable future for our next generations, is the primary motivation behind the concept of 'Green Growth'. The concept is designed to revisit, revise, rethink, and improve the clearly unsustainable growth model that the world is currently following and start thinking on alternate pathways to development. Over the past few years, many countries have been trying to cope with this challenge by firstly defining what "green" actually means and secondly endeavouring to translate it into practical action on the ground. Within this context, lack of strong and unflinching political commitment has been often cited as one of the most difficult barriers to implementation.

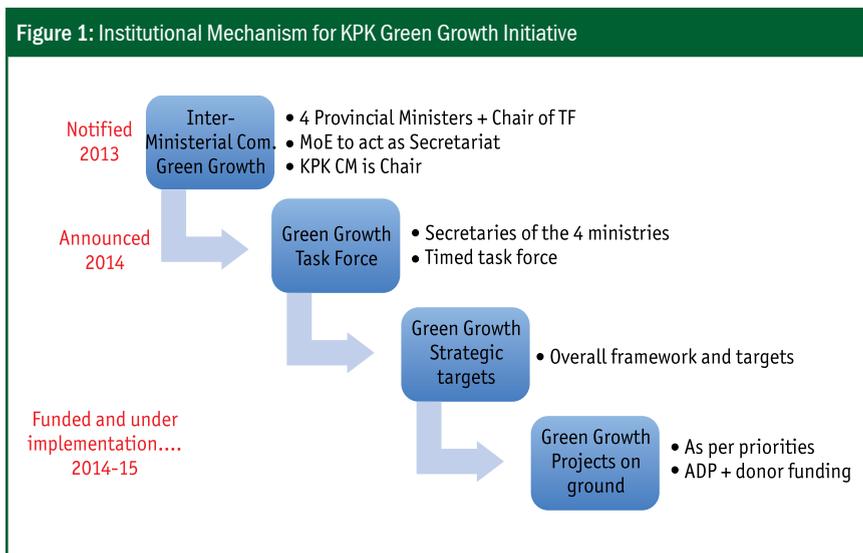
Pakistan's Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) took the initiative of politically conceptualizing the notion of a green economy in Pakistan. This was based upon a philosophical premise that for the successful implementation of any 'green' agenda, it has to be politically owned and passionately driven. This has been the fundamental philosophy behind the unique political experiment currently underway in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province.

The first steps along this roadmap started before the elections of 2013. After extensive consultations and expert input, a 'Green Growth Vision' was unveiled by the party and laid out a strategy for the 'greening' of growth in Pakistan. Subsequently, after the elections it was imperative for PTI to plan and deliver this promised 'green' vision in KPK—the province where it formed the Government. To operationalize the promised vision on environmental sustainability and development, the 'Green Growth Initiative' (GGI) was launched and is currently underway in the province of KPK.

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While gearing up for implementation of PTI’s promised ‘green vision’, it had to be firstly tailored to meet the economic needs, social demands, and political aspirations in KPK. Secondly, parallel to this, an effective institutional mechanism, had to be put in place to oversee delivery. The PTI coalition Government met both the challenges by setting up a two-layered institutional structure consisting of an Inter-Ministerial committee on Green Growth, technically supported by an Expert Task Force on Green Growth. The important factor being that the Chief Minister chairs the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Green Growth (ICGG), a clear signal of strong political commitment, while the Expert task force was challenged to tailor the vision for KPK within a short and restricted time frame, which it successfully achieved in 2014.



Thus, driven by strong political commitment and supported by a delivery-based institutionalized structure, the *six focal sectors* were outlined including the Forestry, Protected Area/National Parks, Clean Energy, Climate Resilience, Water/Sanitation, and Waste Management sectors. Furthermore, after expert deliberations and stakeholders’ input, the *5-year targets* for the first four priority sectors were announced during the GGI launch in 2014. These quantifiable and measurable targets were designed to drive the implementation process.

The litmus test for any political policy or strategy, however, lies in translating it into projects on the ground and allocating them a share out of the budgetary resources. The initiative resulted in flagship projects including—the ‘Billion Tree Tsunami’, the ‘KPK National Parks’ project, and the ‘365 community micro-hydel’ project. These projects were given a shape after a detailed consultation and development process. The projects have now been allocated government funds in

the annual development programme of 2014–15 to operationalize the initiative. This article showcases the Billion Tree Tsunami project; KPK National Parks and Wildlife Protection; and Combating Climate Change and Zero carbon growth.

The Billion Tree Tsunami

The province of KPK houses 40 per cent of Pakistan’s dwindling forests and is also the storehouse of its natural biodiversity. It was, thus logical for forestry and national parks to be a primary focal area for the GGI. Within the forestry sector, through a number of revolutionary measures, the KPK Government has committed to not only reverse the high rate of deforestation but also shift the current philosophy from treating forests as a ‘revenue’ machine towards preserving them as a valued ‘natural capital’.

Exhibit A: The Billion Tree Tsunami

Join the green team for the **billion** Trees Tsunami

Today, March 1, 2014, Imran Khan is inaugurating the first on-ground implementation of the Green Growth Initiative, by planting the first of the targeted two billion trees across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Join in to help fulfill our dream of:

- Planting 2 billion trees in 5 years to increase afforestation
- Bi-annual plantation drives
- Increasing employment generation through Youth Nurseries Program
- Monitoring progress through Google Forest watch tools
- Increasing the forest area to 22% in 5 years
- Doubling the size of area under national parks
- Incentivizing carbon sequestration through REDO+

For the first time in the history of Pakistan, the forest area in KPK is targeted for a major enhancement from 20 per cent to 22 per cent by 2018, which would entail converting, at least, 30,000 hectares of additional forests through a massive afforestation drive. In addition, through enrichment measures, the tree cover in existing forests would be increased from 20 per cent to 30 per cent by 2018. This would entail protection and gap plantations on, at least, 27,000 hectares each year.

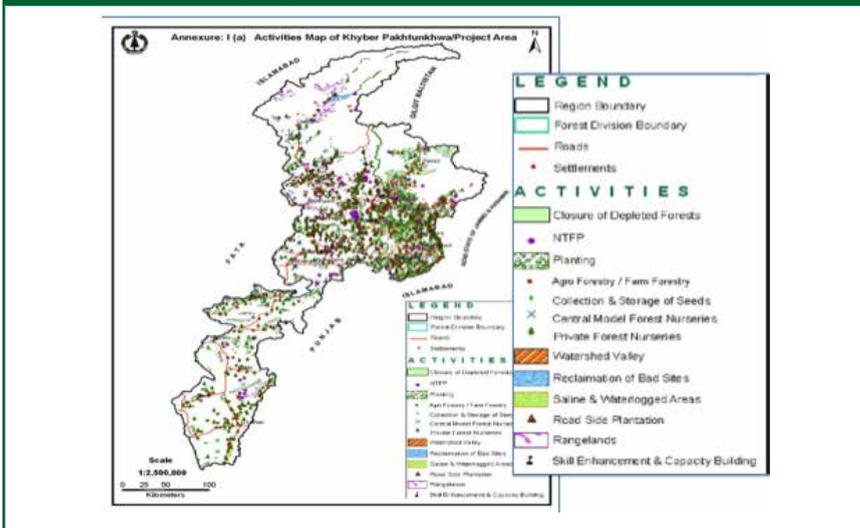




The above-mentioned ambitious targets would be achieved through the massive 4-year ‘Billion Tree Tsunami’ project, which is now underway. The project has been designed to include various new facets such as:

- ▶ A programme for establishing ‘youth nurseries’ which should create decent and green jobs for the youth of KPK. The Government will have secure buyback agreements with small scale nursery owners to encourage green employment. Detailed village level GIS mapping has been done for the whole province to identify the sites for these nurseries as well as the plantations.
- ▶ It innovatively focuses on outsourcing new forest growth to the private sector in order to ensure survival of planted forests through financial incentives spread over three years.
- ▶ Community ownership and protection of enrichment forestry has been proposed under the project. Trained ‘Forest *nighabans*’ will be hired by the communities and financed by the Government.
- ▶ The Government is also in the process of establishing rules for REDD+, an innovative global financial instrument that aims to reverse deforestation by providing cashable carbon value to standing forests.
- ▶ A complete ban on cutting and felling of trees in the reserved forests of KPK has already been imposed and it will be converting, in a phased manner, all these state-owned forests into protected areas.
- ▶ To ensure accountability and transparency, the project entails an independent third party monitoring regime to be put in place, which will use tools such as GIS monitoring and Google Earth, to ensure compliance with what has been committed.

Exhibit C: Detailed GIS mapping for informed interventions



The above project concept has been preliminarily accepted for inclusion under the global ‘Bonn Targets—a regime where voluntary forestry targets are recognized. Once officially recognized, KPK will be the first sub-national entity in the world to receive this honour of recognition.

National Parks and Wildlife Protection

Being the custodian of a major portion of Pakistan’s natural biodiversity, the KPK Government has committed to not only expanding the Protected Areas/National Parks in KPK but also ensuring their professional and proper management and preservation by integrating this with ecotourism. To oversee and manage this transformation, the GGI has announced:

- ▶ The formation of a high powered and autonomous ‘Wildlife and National Parks Management Board’ through a legislative bill.
- ▶ A specialized ‘Wildlife and Park Management’ Youth force, given special powers under this legislation, will be professionally trained to act as nature’s guards and create tremendous employment opportunities.
- ▶ The legislation includes formation of a provincial level ‘Wildlife and Parks Fund’ which will be connected with small conservation funds to be set up at each National Park.
- ▶ The above fund has been allowed powers to do direct raising of funds and spending it for purposes of protection of wildlife and managing national parks.
- ▶ The ‘National Parks Management’ project has been designed and includes funds for the above purposes.

The target is that area under protected areas increases from 11 per cent to 15 per cent by 2018. All of these steps would also generate green jobs while raising awareness and sensitizing the public to KPK’s unique natural heritage. KPK is also aiming to achieve global linkage for this initiative by enlisting it under the recently formulated ‘Asian National Parks Authority’. The work for doing so has already begun and would again give KPK global recognition for a locally implemented environmental initiative.

Combating Climate Change and Targeting ‘Zero Carbon’ Growth

Climate change remains a pressing challenge for the KPK province, which, owing to its geography and topography, is the province in Pakistan, most vulnerable to climate change impacts. The repeated ravaging floods in the past few years have been a stark reminder of the devastation and infrastructure loss which this vulnerability can cost. Thus, the GGI logically targets enhancing the climate resilience of the province through vulnerability mapping and climate proofing of its infrastructure.

The fourth important sector of the GGI is also linked with the climate responsibility that KP is undertaking by voluntarily committing to ‘zero carbon’ growth. This would encompass the efforts for promotion of clean energy and carbon sequestration.

- ▶ The Forestry and National Parks initiative have been outlined above and relate to climate mitigation through sequestering carbon in forest and protected rangelands.
- ▶ In addition, by 2018, KPK will expand its energy base by adding an additional 3,000 MW to 4,000 MW but will remain committed to clean energy by ensuring that, at least, 80 per cent of its power generation is based on clean renewable energy, namely hydro and solar.
- ▶ A hallmark of this initiative is the project bringing online 356 community driven small hydro projects amounting to 35 MW of clean off-grid energy delivering clean energy and community jobs across the province. All the sites of these micro-hydro projects have already been identified and many of them already launched through a public-private partnership. The aim is to provide cheap and affordable electricity (INR 2/unit) to offgrid villages and to deliver this service without any load shedding.
- ▶ In addition, a plan is also envisaged for piloting a ‘solar roofs’ project in Peshawar as well as a ‘solar tube wells’ provision for the farmers of KPK thus moving the province towards a greener development pathway.

Exhibit D: Micro-hydro in operation in Malakand KPK



Discussion

The Green Growth Initiative of KPK is now firmly on its feet after an extensive planning and development phase. This revolutionary initiative aims to be a flag bearer of a green revolution in Pakistan and to ensure a better quality of life to the citizens of KPK, creation of decent and clean job opportunities for the youth and become a means for social upliftment and poverty eradication in the province.

The politics of change demands shifting from sloganeering towards delivery. Hopefully the successful implementation of the GGI will not only establish the notion of political ownership being a pre-requisite for catalysing green growth in Pakistan, and the world, but also create a paradigm shift in KPK's growth trajectory—leading to prosperity, poverty reduction, and a better quality of life for the people while fulfilling the imperatives for a cleaner environment.

