

## **Sustainable Agriculture: Pakistan's Path to Food Security**

The agriculture sector plays a pivotal role in the economic growth and development of a country through employment generation, food security, and export competitiveness. In Pakistan, the agriculture sector is of prime importance contributing [22.9% of the GDP](#) driven by forward and backward linkages in the commodity sector. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23, the sector contributes significantly to creating employment opportunities, accounting for 37.4% of the total employment. Despite the unprecedented floods, the agriculture sector witnessed a [growth of around 1.55%](#) due to growth in the production of wheat and sugarcane, as well as livestock last year.

In recent years, the agriculture sector in Pakistan has faced considerable challenges due to the escalating impacts of climate change. These climate shocks, exhibited through extreme weather events such as floods, drought, erratic rainfall, and rising temperature, lead to adverse impacts on agriculture productivity, food security, and rural livelihoods. The productivity of two main sub-sectors of the agriculture sector, including crops and livestock, is highly volatile and prone to climate change. Unfavourable climate situations like floods, droughts, and heavy rains have declined agricultural output, and low productivity for cereal and non-cereal commodities results in food insecurity.

Recognising the importance of sustainable agricultural practices, the role of the banking sector is of prime importance. To revive the sector, the Bank of Punjab (BOP) has taken a proactive approach by launching multiple initiatives aimed at promoting environmentally friendly agriculture, empowering farmers and building climate resilience. According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), BOP ranks as the best medium-sized bank with a score of 60.5 in the disbursement of agricultural credit loans. Its [agricultural products](#) include 'Kissan Dost Production Loan', 'BOP Tractor Lease', 'Kissan Dost Lease Finance Facility', 'Kissan Dost Cold Storage Finance Facility', 'Kissan Dost Livestock Development Scheme', 'BOP Agri Vehicle Leasing', 'Financing Facility for Storage of Agriculture Produce (FFSAP)', 'BOP Agri Vehicle Loan', and 'BOP Non-Farm Loan'. Providing farmers with access to affordable financing through green credit schemes has helped them to adopt sustainable agricultural practices, such as drip irrigation systems, solar-powered water pumps, and organic farming techniques.

The Bank has initiated agricultural advisory services under their established Agriculture Business Facilitation Window that provides farmers with guidance on sustainable farming practices, crop selection, and efficient resource management from agricultural experts. BOP's commitment to sustainable agriculture aligns with the national food security goals of Pakistan and contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By promoting sustainable practices, BOP is helping to secure the agricultural future of the country, ensuring a stable food supply for all.

In the context of the above background and challenges, this session will address the following key questions:

1. How can Pakistan enhance its public sector to fortify against climate challenges? What strategies can ensure the agriculture sector's long-term sustainability?
2. How might the government formulate a robust working model to bolster strategies devised by the private sector, particularly within the banking domain?

3. Given the vital role of agricultural insurance in managing climate risks, how can Pakistan establish a functional agricultural insurance system in the face of extreme weather conditions?

**Panel Organisers**

Dr Sajid Amin Javed, Deputy Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

Email: [Sajidamin@sdpi.org](mailto:Sajidamin@sdpi.org)

Engr. Ahad Nazir, Program Manager, Centre for Private Sector Engagement, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

Email: [ahad@sdpi.org](mailto:ahad@sdpi.org)

Mr Abdullah Khalid, Project Coordinator, Centre for Private Sector Engagement, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

Email: [abdullah@sdpi.org](mailto:abdullah@sdpi.org)

Ms Zainab Baloch, Project Assistant, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan

Email: [zainabaloch@sdpi.org](mailto:zainabaloch@sdpi.org)