Looking back to moving forward

Annual reports generally look outwards. They are usually meant to showcase an organisation’s yearly performance mostly for outsiders: general public, supporters, partners, donors etc. Consequently, most of them fall in the category of promotional literature.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) has taken a different route this year: Our annual report for 2019 speaks as much to others as it does to the organisation itself. Not as a monologue but as a conversation. Not as a reverie but as an exchange of ideas. Questionnaires were circulated, templates were moved around and discussions were held to achieve that objective. The outcome is this document that aims simultaneously at introspection and prognosis.
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A view through time

SDPI was founded in August 1992 on the recommendation of the framers of Pakistan’s National Conservation Strategy (NCS) – also called Agenda 21. The organisation was registered as a non-profit, non-government entity under the Societies Registration Act of 1860. Its original mandate was to serve as a source for policy formulation, policy analysis, policy advocacy and policy advice related to Agenda 21. The initial funding for its work also came from the federal government.

Soon afterwards, however, SDPI expanded the scope of its work to other fields such as political economy, financial and fiscal policies and human development. It also started eliciting and receiving funds from national and international donors.

SDPI produces robust evidence-based research that can be deployed to change perceptions, policies and practices in both public and private sectors – and also at the governmental and societal levels. It works closely with various government departments, legislators both at federal and provincial levels, development partners, foreign diplomatic missions, academia, civil society organisations and private sector businesses. It also provides research input to its donors and partners so that they can respond to various challenges that Pakistan is facing in the formulation and implementation of public policies.

SDPI, in effect, produces knowledge that enhances the government’s capacity to make informed policy decisions. It also engages the country’s development partners and civil society organisations in a research-driven dialogue over issues of public interest. It, therefore, has a two-fold function: 1) providing advice to the government through research, policy analysis and advocacy; and 2) creating an enabling environment for individual researchers, donor organisations, research institutions and civil society so that they can partake in policy debates in an informed manner.

Besides generating and disseminating policy research and policy analysis, SDPI also provides trainings of various types. These trainings are mainly aimed at improving the skill level of development practitioners, policymakers, researchers, government functionaries and political representatives – among others – to enable their effective participation in policymaking, policy critique and policy implementation.

The organisation also fosters and facilitates regional and global collaboration for a transition towards sustainable development which it defines as a way of policymaking that promotes peace inside and outside Pakistan, ensures social and economic justice and leads to individual and collective well-being within and across generations. Its vision rests on three main pillars: environment, economic growth and social development. Some of the important thematic areas under these pillars include: governance and accountability, socio-economic justice, peace, conflict resolution and security, economic growth, poverty alleviation, equitable resource distribution, energy, gender, religious freedom, health, population, education, agriculture, industrial development, environment, climate change, food security and sustainable livelihoods.

To realize its vision, SDPI works as a multidisciplinary, process-oriented, knowledge-based organisation. Over the last 28 years, it has produced a vast body of evidence-based literature on a huge number of important public policy issues.

In the meanwhile, it has evolved into a large entity running multiple research and advocacy programs simultaneously and employing around 130 people. It has also developed -- and utilises -- a number of in-house arrangements to disseminate its work within Pakistan as well as abroad. These include, but are not limited to, an annual Sustainable Development Conference (SDC), a web-based Sustainable Development Television (SDTV), a peer-reviewed research journal, newsletters, magazines, books and other publications.

SDPI has also played -- and continues to play -- an important role in identifying problems that hinder the sharing of development dividends among all the citizens of Pakistan. It suggests ways and means for an inclusive and equitable economic growth while at the same time keeping in view the broader regional and international contexts in terms of geopolitics and global political economy.
The numbers speak

University of Pennsylvania in the United States releases its Global Go To Think Tank Index every year. The 14th edition of the index ranked 8,500 think-tanks from across the globe – including 25 from Pakistan – on the basis of their performance in 2019. According to this ranking, SDPI came on top in its home country, stood 15th in the whole of Southeast Asia and the Pacific region and was ranked 52nd best “independent” think-tank in the entire world.

The index ranked SDPI among top global think-tanks in 14 categories. It earned 101st spot among all non-US think-tanks, received 141st position among think-tanks focused on domestic policy, got 78th place among food security think-tanks and became 51st think-tank to watch in 2020.

SDPI, indeed, improved its ranking in seven categories in 2019 compared to 2018. Just to cite two examples, it went from 101 to 99 among social policy think-tanks and from 67 to 66 among environment policy think-tanks.

SDPI also improved its ranking in terms of individual components of its work – from 44 to 42 in quality assurance and integrity policies and procedures, from 65 to 64 in advocacy campaigns and from 78 to 77 in external relations and public engagement.
A look back…

When SDPI was set up in August 1992, both its name (which contains the word sustainable) and its mandate (which focused on ensuring that natural environment could sustain the pressure of human activities) were ahead of its time. The need for a sustainable economic growth was yet to become a part of the global development agenda. Indeed, the United Nations would introduce its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) around a quarter of a century later. It was also understood at the time that SDPI was needed mainly to provide policy inputs to the government so that sustainability of Pakistan’s natural and physical resources could be also ensured while it pursued its economic agenda. Back then, this was in sync with that nature of national economy which was mostly in the hands of the state.

Soon afterwards, privatisation of public sector entities coupled with liberalization of the economy on the whole started giving a massive boost to the private sector. It was no longer sufficient to advise only the government about the sustainability -- or otherwise -- of its policies.

Along the way, development discourse all over the world started realising the importance of a healthy, educated and trained human resource for a sustainable future of the world – including Pakistan. The need to ensure the sustainability of human resources increased further as terrorism grew across our region from 2001 onwards and an environment of seemingly endless conflicts dragged large sections of the youth of our society in vicious cycles of discrimination, deprivation, radicalisation and violence.

These cataclysmic changes have coincided with perhaps the most disruptive changes in technology. The unprecedented development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has not just made it possible to transfer and transmit information across the globe with the mere click of a button. These have also created a cultural, economic and political environment in which globalisation and nationalism – and/or individualism and collectivism – seem to be pitched against each other in a perpetual, but unwinnable, war.

So, in a nutshell, neither the economy nor the society is the same as it was back in the early 1990s. How could SDPI deal with – and make sense of – this hugely hanged world if it did not, or could not, change with the changing times.

This is not to suggest that SDPI has failed to keep pace with time. It, indeed, has – as is obvious from the numerous projects it has undertaken in such fields as food security, regional peace, transboundary collaboration and cooperation on the maintenance and management of natural and physical resources and the role and importance of a digital revolution in making or breaking the human habitat and human civilization as we know them today. Its administrative and financial structures, too, have changed as have its thematic emphasis and research areas. From being an exclusively government-funded entity, it is now working with many international bilateral and multilateral organisations as well as with some local and foreign private sector partners. It has also evolved from being a small group of researchers during its early years to a large institution which now conducts many more activities than just research – including surveys, advocacy and public engagements of various kinds and forms with policymakers and other stakeholders.
The move forward...

Both climate change and artificial intelligence – and the fourth industrial revolution that it promises to usher in - were still largely academic concepts and subjects of science fiction two and a half decade ago. Now, thanks to the information explosion and the fourth industrial revolution, they have become a part of the lived experience of millions of people across the world. Many communities, even countries, have become extremely vulnerable to extreme changes in weather patterns and other climatic features such as polar ice-caps, glaciers and rainforests. Innumerable users of Information and Communication Technologies today have to deal with various forms of artificial intelligence – from medical diagnostics and weapon testing to environment modelling and street surveillance and monitoring. To state the obvious, climate change and artificial intelligence have become integral parts of national and international development agendas and public policy discourses.

So, how much more does SDPI need to change in order to cope with the changes mentioned above? Can it move itself to the cutting edge of public policy research without changing its existing organisational ethos and resources? Or does it need to completely restructure itself in order to become a 21st century marketplace for creating information and generating ideas?

These questions, in fact, have been the subject of a lively debate among the SDPI staff in recent times. In a three-day long retreat in February 2020, these became under formal and critical scrutiny from all the various possible angles. Though some of the discussions at the retreat remain inconclusive and others fall in the remit of the board of governors to decide and approves, there was a consensus among its participants that a lot needs to stay the same at SDPI while a lot more needs to change. Homegrown research agenda requires more focus than it receives now but research fellows should continue to provide leadership to the organisation. More emphasis should be placed on partnerships with private sector – both in terms of conducting research and resource generation -- but a close working relation with the government should also be maintained to keep SDPI relevant to the formulation of public sector policies. So on and so forth.

The most relevant question for this annual report to ask here is: what role can it play in advancing this debate further? And that is exactly what it is trying to do. Rather than being a large-scale snapshot of SDPI’s work over the calendar year 2019, what you seen in the following pages is an attempt to make the annual report into both an agenda-driven and agenda-setting document.

So, going beyond merely showcasing various projects and other activities carried out by the different sections/units/teams of the organisation in 2019, it focusses on key agendas and mandates of each section, units and team and critically analyzes whether these agendas and mandates were achieved. It also aims at looking at the factors that contribute to achieving these and the ones that hamper and stall these. The idea here is to identify and evaluate all that works for SDPI and all that does not – with the objectives to reinforce the former and eliminate the latter.

Admittedly, the implementation of such an idea was never going to be easy. Organisations of the size and stature of SDPI become averse to both changes and risks. The anxieties and pressures related to internal reform and restructuring are an inevitable part of this process – as is the tendency to see any attempt at self-reflection as and self-analysis as demoralising, even destabilising, particularly for those members of the organisation who are more comfortable with maintaining the status quo than with change and reformation. But, as the succeeding pages testify, staff at SDPI is not just cognizant of the need for change but is also wholeheartedly backing any efforts being made in this regard – including this annual report.

The editors of this report are extremely grateful to all the members of the senior management who not just endorsed the idea of restructuring this document but also made a case for it if and even so required. The editors are also thankful to all the staff members who took the time and trouble to provide the information to be contained herein. Without their cooperation and collaboration, this report would never have materialised.
Looking inwards
As the image on opposite page shows, SDPI’s structure consists of four mutually reinforcing and also overlapping layers. These are:

- **Core** – the staff engaged in research, evidence collection, field reporting, policy outreach and training
- **Center** – the four specialized sections engaged in specific tasks that supplement and complement the core’s work
- **Communication** – the various ways and means to disseminate and distribute SDPI’s work, these include Ahmad Salim Resource Center, sdpi.org, SDTV, newsletters/social media platforms
- **Cover** – the sections that assist/support the rest of the organisation in carrying out its tasks and activities

This layered structure helps the core staff carry out its activities without having to worry about the auxiliary administrative and managerial tasks. On the flip side, it necessitates a continuous coordination and uninterrupted flow of communication across the organisation – both of which requiring time, effort and resources. Also, given that SDPI is a large institution with more than 130 employees, it is not always easy, or even possible, to ensure the continuity of coordination and smoothness of communication flow among its different parts.

To address the problem, SDPI has adopted several measures in recent times. These include:

- automation/digitization of the functions of human resources and finance departments to minimize the need for physical contact between them and the research staff
- setting up high-level institutional mechanisms for swift procurements/appointments
- ensuring oversight/supervision by senior research staff of all administrative functions
- establishment of a research coordination unit and the Executive Director’s office as central coordinating entities across the organisation.

While each of these steps is leading to improvement in the organisation’s working, the change has also generated its own challenges some of which are listed below:

- a higher level of automation/digitization has increased the role and importance of a highly sophisticated management information system. This, in turn, has underscored the need for a highly-skilled and suitably staffed section that can run that system efficiently and effectively
- various research-related datasets evolved recently as a result of automation/digitization have similarly generated the need for developing specialized tools so that these datasets can be utilized productively both in research work and advocacy efforts
- the changeover from physical communications to digital and online ones did not immediately result in a commensurate transformation in the organisation’s administrative processes and procedures. Lines of communication and chains of command for a smooth flow of internal information, thus, took time to evolve (although now, under the work-from-home regime necessitated by the spread of coronavirus, they have passed their first major test successfully)
oversight/supervision by senior research staff pushed the administrative/managerial sections to make rapid changes in their standard operating procedures. This restructuring led to occasional administrative confusions and functional overlaps — as is usually the case with all quick and large-scale modifications.

the new institutional mechanisms — such as the research coordination unit and the Executive Director’s office — initially became overburdened with intra-organisational coordination and trouble-shooting (although they have now evolved protocols to address the problem effectively).

As a central pillar of its strategy to tackle these challenges, SDPI has strengthened its internal dialogue more than even before. The methods and mechanisms being put in place to reform the working of the organisation and thereby improve its performance often come under serious reviews and revisions at its various internal forums. These include a recent annual retreat (held in February 2020) and several subsequent staff/management meetings.

Apart from tackling its administrative/managerial challenges, SDPI has also used these forums to carry out several self-analytical debates over the relative weightage and importance of its two core functions: research and advocacy/policy outreach. Should it focus on being only a research organisation? Or should it continue to combine research and policy advocacy? While research gives SDPI the reputation it has — of being one of Pakistan’s premier think-tanks — advocacy gives it unparalleled access into the sanctum sanctorum of policymaking. The convening power it has at its disposal -- thanks mainly to its highly visible advocacy program -- allows it to not just critique but also influence the government’s policies like no other research organisation can.

Why this dichotomy between research and advocacy exists in the first place is because of the way SDPI functions. Almost all the research it does is funded by its national and international development partners. An advocacy component is often built within every funded research project. But, while development partners mostly determine the nature, scope, scale and duration of research on their own, more often than not they allow SDPI a relatively higher level of operational autonomy in advocacy. Since this autonomy helps the organisation have the ear of policymakers and gain the ability to influence policymaking, it results in advocacy becoming as important a component of SDPI’s work as research is. In some instances, in fact, advocacy even takes precedence over research which explains why some of the organisation’s advocacy-related work – such as its regular Monday seminars and the annual Sustainable Development Conferences (SDCs) -- are almost always independent of its research activities and funding imperatives.

Fully aware of these dynamics, SDPI’s ongoing internal discourse has recently focused on discussing and implementing the following changes:

- devising and implementing its own homegrown agenda both for research and advocacy in line with its foundational vision, values and mission statement
- bringing advocacy activities – including Monday seminars and SDCs – more in line with its own research agenda than is already being done
- exploring the possibility of funding research and advocacy through money that does not come with any strings attached; this could be done through the creation of an endowment fund, partnerships with private businesses, collaboration with universities and academia and joint ventures with international research organisations
- setting up a mechanism to populate both research and advocacy components with senior researchers in order to create stronger cross-sectional links between the two
- reimagining the relevant national, regional and international policy landscape.

Both the organisation’s top management and its staff, however, realize that it can have and follow its homegrown agendas only if it can ensure its financial autonomy — as has been also emphasized in almost all the essays included in the earlier part of this annual report. There is also a discussion going on within the organisation over how to create a stronger link between training and the other two components of it work than there already is. Trainings being imparted often follow a trajectory defined and devised in accordance with market demands. Will enough people
be willing to pay a certain amount of money for a certain training program? That is usually the main criterion to determine the subject, format and the duration of a training. There is a strong realization within SDPI that this needs to change in order for training to move entirely in tandem with research and advocacy.

In an ideal world, the training component should be dedicated to coaching SDPI’s own staff in carrying out tasks and activities assigned to them – besides, of course, making efforts to monetize its activities by attracting external trainees as well. This will help the organisation address another problem too: the quality and the turnover of its entry-level staff. While the organisation has been quite successful in attracting talented and intelligent young graduates, it often cannot retain them due to a number of factors including the failure of the new entrants to develop the skills its highly demanding work culture requires.

A training program restructured along these lines will not just ensure that these entrants acquire the skills that help them produce high-quality research and advocacy work. It will also assist them in understanding their own strengths and weaknesses and thereby identify suitable openings for themselves within SDPI.
The view from the top

First came the globalisation of economy. Production and supply chains of goods and services became integrated across national boundaries – in fact, across continents. Different parts of a Nokia cell phone used by a government employee in Islamabad might have travelled three continents before coming together in Finland and then being sold in Pakistan. Then came the globalisation of information. Developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) made news being generated in the Philippines to travel at the speed of light and be heard and viewed in Portugal within seconds.

The third wave of globalisation that the world is going through as we speak has been more a bane than a boon for humanity. The fluttering of a butterfly’s wings in the Himalayan foothills can cause floods in as far as Honolulu. The natural and man-made catastrophes can now travel across the globe at the flick of a button. From computer viruses and theft of online data to the melting of glaciers in Pakistan’s north and the cutting of Amazonian forests – all have impacts thousands of miles away from where they originate.

While the first two waves of globalisation persuaded governments everywhere that they could not live in isolation, the third one is increasingly making them wish if they could. Diseases and disasters now have assumed a global dimension that no one can avoid in the age of a global epidemic and rising sea levels.

SDPI can ill-afford to remain oblivious to these developments if it has to remain relevant in the 21st century. And it has done quite well so far to adapt itself to the rapidly changing world around it. But the challenges it is facing are too big to be handled by maintaining the status quo alone. The need for change is both urgent and strong.

This is mainly because Pakistan is facing many serious challenges today. The most serious of them are summarised below:

a) vast parts of Pakistan’s economy are experiencing the strains that climate change has put on the country’s natural resources; agriculture and its related industries are no longer as productive as they used to be due to decline in water availability, erosion of soil’s fertility, overuse of fertilizers and pesticides among other things;

b) the perennial macro-economic imbalances mean that Pakistan remains heavily dependent upon foreign aid and advice to keep its economy going; but its international development partners are losing both the will and the capacity to continue helping it as governments in Europe and North America cut their aid budgets; that the authorities in Islamabad are also wary of the intent and purpose of some donors is certainly not helping the situation;

c) the national discourse is dominated by powerful elements within the state and the society; consequently, the demand for an evidence-based, empirical research and argument has never been lower in the country than it is now; the policy space has been taken over by the ideological and strategic interests of the state than by its economic, social and environmental ones;

d) the country is failing to offer its best brains the right kind of incentives to stay and work here.
Each of these national level problems also affects SDPI’s work – both directly and indirectly. Greater the climatic risks to Pakistan’s economy, the higher the need to understand the causes and effects of climate change and devise mitigation policies and strategies based on scientific research and analysis. SDPI, by virtue of being Pakistan’s oldest think tank working on sustainable development is well-placed to take a lead in this regard. But a shrinking space for many international development partners and the predominance of the policy space by certain interests mean that it does not always get the required financial support and the opportunities to do what it must be doing. This bad situation becomes only worse if one considers the fact that the quality of human resources available in the country is not as high as Pakistan – and SDPI – require to meet the challenges mentioned above. A rapid brain drain is hollowing out the institutions of the state and the society as the highly skilled, highly educated and highly talented young people do not find the opportunities in their own country to be conducive for them to flourish personally and professionally.

So, in order to overcome these hurdles, SDPI will not just need to adapt – something that it has already been doing quite effectively and efficiently. It will also require to be smart and innovative – so as to be able to more with less. As the head of the organisation’s agenda-setting forum, I only expect SDPI’s top management and its staff to come up to these requirements – and quicker the better.

At the same time, however, I am fully cognizant of the great contribution that SDPI has made in various areas of policy research and advocacy. I, therefore, wholeheartedly congratulate its management and staff for having completed another year of its existence with success and aplomb. I also wish them the best for year 2020 and all the years that come after that.

*Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel*
Chairperson of SDPI’s Board of Governors
The travails of a transition

For the first few years after SDPI started working back in 1992, its work mostly focused on what was happening within Pakistan. Its core objective in those days was to support the implementation of National Conservation Strategy that the then government had adopted as an official document. The regional dimension of its work at the time was mainly focused on addressing environment-related issues. But, as the financial and commercial globalisation started taking root, SDPI also became an important player in promoting economic cooperation across South Asia. After the United Nations adopted Millennium Development Goals as international benchmarks in 2000, the organisation expanded its partnerships beyond its immediate neighborhood and started working with partners across the globe. With the advent of Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, the scale and scope of this collaboration have become only wider and deeper.

Over the last few years, however, globalisation has come under tremendous pressure. Global trade deals have fallen apart and many regional cooperation mechanisms, including the European Union and the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are going through severe stress tests. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is failing to even hold its meetings regularly. Some of its member states – particularly Pakistan and India – are not even on talking terms.

New combinations and permutations of inter-state linkages, meanwhile, are taking shape as international politics and strategic imperatives shift – nationally, regionally as well as globally. The unipolar world, dominated by the United States, that came into existence after the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s has come to an end. New regional and global centers of power are now emerging and there is a higher emphasis than before on one-on-one relations between countries – both within and across regions. This is best illustrated in Pakistan’s relationship with GCC member states which no longer have a unanimous point of view on any of the economic, commercial, financial and/or strategic problems confronting their own regions as well as the rest of the world. Pakistan’s relationship with China also is neither the effect of a region-wide platform nor is the cause of one.

Within this changed world order, additional uncertainty has been sown by two more factors: 1) the almost universal spread of social media and; 2) the rise of populist nationalism in many parts of the world. While the former has contributed to, and has also resulted from, a narrowing of attention spans, the latter is leaving little space for rational, evidence-based research and analysis. It, indeed, thrives on conspiracy theories and on blaming others for one’s own problems.

The combined effect of social media and populist nationalism everywhere in the world is that the appetite for detailed, detached and deep analysis is very low – if it is still there at all. This constricts our search for new audiences for our work.

These constraints suggest that SDPI needs to allocate considerable amount of resources, time and efforts to explore new policy spaces and new audience for its work -- but without losing the ones it has now. It must also find innovative ways and means to make its work accessible and easily digestible so that its new age consumers do not spurn it but find it useful to engage with it. While the former will require a certain reassigning of roles and responsibilities and some kind of a restructuring within SDPI, the latter will need a smart and creative communications strategy compatible with the imperatives of digital age.
We have already taken some important steps in this regard – including the setting up of China Study Centre and the efforts to engage private sector. I will, however, take this opportunity to point out a few more themes that may be a part of our existing work but will definitely need more focus in the coming years. These include:

1) Peace building and youth development
2) The gender dimension of migration being caused by violent conflicts and climate change among other things
3) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly with reference to social justice, women empowerment and economic and environmental equity
4) Digitisation, social media, artificial intelligence and their social, cultural, economic and political impacts
5) The impact of climate change on agrarian economy and vulnerable ecosystems
6) The political economy of federal, provincial and local government systems in Pakistan.

It is heartening to note that all of the suggestions mentioned above have been made by one member of the staff or other in some recent internal deliberations. I am reiterating them here only to underscore the high level of understanding – and also commitment – that SDPI staff and its leadership are showing vis-à-vis the reformation we require to become a 21st century fountainhead of technologically smart, socially relevant and economically sustainable ideas.

I am fully aware of the fact that making this changeover possible will strain and stretch our existing human and financial resources beyond their limits. Consequently, our personal and institutional mettle are going to be tested to the maximum. I am, however, confident in our individual and collective abilities to make it to the other side safely and securely.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri
Executive Director
Board of Governors
Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel has been a member of SDPI's Board of Governors since 2009. He also worked as deputy executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme and as assistant secretary general of the United Nations. In May 1995, he was elected as president of the United Nations Environment Programme’s governing council and was also the chief negotiator for G-77 countries in preparatory meetings of the second World Summit on Human Settlements. He was elected as a chair of the main negotiations committee at the summit held in Istanbul in June 1996.

Born and raised in Peshawar, Kakakhel joined Pakistan’s foreign service in 1969 and went on to become deputy high commissioner and high commissioner in New Delhi and Nairobi respectively. He also represented his country as permanent representative to the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements-HABITAT.

He studied at the Edwardes College, Islamia College and the University of Peshawar and obtained a master’s degree in political science.

Malik Amin Aslam

Mr Aslam has been working as Prime Minister’s advisor on climate change since August 2018. Previously, he worked as consultant with World Bank and United Nations on environmental issues and was given Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, a high civilian award, on March 23, 2019 for his work in the field.

He has also worked as a member of United Nations Working Group on Climate Change since 1997 and has been a member of the international editorial board of Climate Policy Journal since 1998. He has written a number of articles and co-authored two books.

Mr Aslam also remained a member of the National Environmental Advisory Board and the Environmental Protection Council. In 2011 and 2016, he was elected as a member of the governing council of International Union for Conservation of Nature. He also chaired the ‘Green Growth Initiative’ for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and was chosen as a member of the high level international advisory council for the Eco-Forum Global.

Born on November 27, 1966, he did his bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, a master’s degree in business administration from McGill University in 1993 and another master’s degree in environmental management from the University of Oxford in 1996.
Mr Khan is non-executive director of Packages Limited, IGI Insurance Limited and Abbott Laboratories. He is also a member of the advisory committee of Center for International Private Enterprise.

Mr Khan joined civil service in 1962 and retired as federal secretary commerce. He then worked at the Corporate Law Authority which regulated corporate sector – first as a member and then as chairman – changing it into the Securities and Exchange Commission. He also served as member and chairman of Pakistan Center for Philanthropy’s certification panel and has worked as a consultant for Asian Development Bank, World Bank and British Department for International Development (DFID) too.

Ms Bharucha is a former federal caretaker minister (in 2018), a former Balochistan minister (2000 and 2007-08 ) and a former member of the Senate (2003-06). She has served as a member of many parliamentary standing committees. She has also held honorary positions at several international organisations and forums, has a lot of experience in a diverse set of areas such as teaching, women welfare, sports, information technology, special education and culture.

She holds a master’s degree in English from the University of Balochistan. She also has a degree in finance and accounting form PIMS, Karachi - she obtained in 1993.

Mr Qamar is a member of the Central Executive Committee of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). He has been a federal minister twice (in 1996 and 2013-18), head of the Privatisation Commission (1993) and provincial minister in Sindh (1988-90).

He has won consecutive elections to the National Assembly since 1990 and was elected a member of Sindh Assembly in 1988. He also briefly worked as a member of computer science faculty at the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences.

Mr Qamar is the founder of Parliamentarians for New South Asia which works under a civil society campaign, Imagine New South Asia. He did his bachelor’s in 1976 from Manchester University, UK, a master’s in management from Northrop University, USA, in 1978 and another master’s in business administration from California State University, USA, in 1979.
Professor Ahsan Iqbal Chaudry  
Member

Mr Iqbal was federal interior minister in 2017-18 and federal minister for planning in 2013-17. When he was deputy chairman of the Planning Commission in 1998-99, he devised Vision 2010 for Pakistan, a blueprint for the country’s long-term economic management and planning. He has been elected to the National Assembly several times between 1990 and 2018 and worked as Assistant to Prime Minister on public policy in 1993.

He has been instrumental in starting several reforms programs in knowledge and good governance sectors and has also served as a professor of management at Mohammad Ali Jinnah University, Islamabad, between 2000 and 2007.

Mr Iqbal has also worked as chairman of Pakistan Engineering Board as well as National Steering Committees on Information Technology and IQM and Productivity. He served as a senior advisor of Al-Madinah Al-Monawarah Digital Economy Project (2004 to 2006) too.

M Adil Khattak  
Member

Mr Khattak is the chief executive officer of Attock Refinery Limited. He is also the Chief Executive Officer of Attock Gen Limited, Attock Hospital (Private) Limited and National Cleaner Production Centre (NCPC). Associated with Attock Oil Group for the last 35 years, he is a member of the board of directors at Attock Petroleum Limited and Attock Information Technology Services Limited too. He is also the chairman of Oil Companies Advisory Committee and a director of Petroleum Institute of Pakistan.

Mr Khattak is serving as member of boards of governors of many educational institutions – including Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering, Sciences and Technology (GIKI) and Cadet College Hassanabdal. He is also a part of the corporate advisory committee of the National University of Science and Technology, a member of the board of studies of University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar, and president of Attock Sahara Foundation, an NGO working for the welfare of the poor.

Mr Khattak received his master’s degree in engineering from Texas Tech. University, USA.
Aisha Khan
Member

Ms Khan is the executive director of Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change and chief executive officer of Mountain and Glacier Organisation. She is a founding member of both the organisations and regularly contributes articles to newspapers and magazines on issues related to environment and climate change.

She has over 18 years of experience in development sector having worked in collaboration with multiple donors, national and sub-national authorities and communities. She has attended many national and international conferences and is a member of the board of directors of Energy Conservation Fund. She is also a part of the certification panel of Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) and the steering committee of Pakistan Glacier Monitoring Network.

Engineer M A Jabbar
Member

Engineer Jabbar is the chief executive of Qaim Automotive Manufacturing (Private) Limited, chairman of Karachi Tools, Dies & Moulds Centre, Honorary Consul General of Ukraine, member of the board of directors of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, member of the board of directors of Pakistan Standard and Quality Control Authority, member of the Privatization Commission of Pakistan, member of the senate of NED University of Engineering and Technology and a life member of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Earlier, he has been vice-president of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce, Industry and chairman of the SITE Association of Industry, member of the board of governors of Pakistan Institute of Management, member of the board of Export Processing Zone Authority, National Fertilizer Corporation, Sui Southern Gas Company, Exide Limited Pakistan and a syndicate member of the Karachi University.

Engineer Jabbar has over three decades of experience in engineering industries and power generation. A certified safety engineer, he has a bachelor’s degree in engineering.
Professor Dr Samina Amin Qadir

Professor Qadir is the vice-chancellor of Pakistan’s first and largest women-only institution of higher learning, Fatima Jinnah Women University. Before assuming her current post, she served as associate professor and then as professor at the same university between 2000 and 2011.

She started her career as a lecturer in 1977 and has been teaching since then in different government institutions. She is also a researcher on gender and media studies.

Professor Qadir earned her PhD in linguistics from Lancaster University, UK, in 1996, and a master’s degree in education from the University of Wales College of Cardiff, Wales, UK, in 1988. She received her first master’s degree from the University of Punjab, Lahore, in 1976 in English language and literature.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri

Dr Suleri has been heading SDPI since 2007. He is a member of many governmental and non-governmental forums and bodies, including Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council, food security advisory group at the National Security Division, Pakistan Climate Change Commission, trade policy advisory committee of the Ministry of Commerce, National Network of Economic Think Tanks, Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation, South Asia Economic Summit’s organizing committee, steering committee of the World Commission on Forced Displacement (Canada), Climate Action Network South Asia and Pakistan State Oil’s management board.

He is a part of Punjab government’s Agricultural Universities Vice-Chancellor’s Search Committee and works as a member of many other committees/councils at the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives and the Higher Education Commission. The superior courts have included him in three different commissions formed recently on environmental issues.

Suleri has represented Pakistan at multiple multilateral forums such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the World Trade Organisation. He is a regular guest speaker at management training courses for bureaucrats, armed forces officers and parliamentarians. An acclaimed writer, with several research and analytical publications to his credit, he is also the editor-in-chief of SDPI’s Journal of Development Policy, Research and Practice. He received his PhD in food security from the University of Greenwich, UK, in May 2000.
Faculty

Faculty and staff at a planning meeting
Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri
Executive Director

Profile and picture of Dr Abid Suleri is given on page 25

Dr Ahmed serves in advisory capacity at many national, regional and international institutions and forums such as Fauji Foundation and Creative Cities project of the British Council Pakistan. He is also a member of steering committee of Southern Voice Think Tanks Network and council member of energy committee of National University of Science & Technology (NUST).

An honorary research fellow at Partnership for Economic Policy, University of Laval in Canada, he has earlier worked as an advisor to United Nations Development Program and as the head of macroeconomics section at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. He has also done various assignments with Asian Development Bank, World Bank, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific as well as with ministries of finance, planning and commerce.


He is also a visiting faculty member and researcher at different institutions, including University of Le Havre in France, National University of Ireland, IMT Institute of Advanced Studies in Italy, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad and Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development.

His research work on inclusive growth, trade, public finance and sustainable development has been published extensively and he has received fellowships from Germany’s Zeit-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, France’s Young Leaders Programme and IMF’s Civil Society Organisatins initiative. He holds a PhD in Economics.

Dr Vaqar Ahmed
Joint Executive Director

Dr Ahmed specializes in human rights, peace-building, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, urban development and sustainable development. He has a wide experience in advocacy, communications and strategic campaigning and has led trainings on humanitarian policy and response issues in various countries across Asia.

Before he started working for SDPI, he served as humanitarian policy advisor for Asia at Oxfam GB for four years. He has also worked with ActionAid and United Nations Development Program.

Dr Ahmed did his PhD in human rights policy from National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad (2017) and got his master’s in political science from Islamia University Bahawalpur (1985-87).

Dr Shafqat Munir Ahmed
Research Fellow and Director
Resilience Development Program

Dr Ahmed specializes in human rights, peace-building, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, urban development and sustainable development. He has a wide experience in advocacy, communications and strategic campaigning and has led trainings on humanitarian policy and response issues in various countries across Asia.

Before he started working for SDPI, he served as humanitarian policy advisor for Asia at Oxfam GB for four years. He has also worked with ActionAid and United Nations Development Program.

Dr Ahmed did his PhD in human rights policy from National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad (2017) and got his master’s in political science from Islamia University Bahawalpur (1985-87).
In his career spanning about 15 years, Dr Javed has worked with some prestigious public and private sector institutes/organisations. Prior to joining SDPI, he was senior research fellow and assistant professor at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). His research interests and published work involve economy-related issues and developments. His work focuses on structural issues of Pakistan’s labour market and the role of fiscal and monetary policies in fighting structural inequalities in South Asia.

Dr Javed is a part of many public sector committees and working groups and is advising the provincial government of Punjab on the prioritization of Sustainable Development Goals in public policy. He regularly contributes to major print media outlets on economic and social policy issues and is also a member of South-South Global Thinkers -- an initiative of United Nations South-South Cooperation. Dr Javed did his PhD in Economics in 2012 from International Islamic University Islamabad.

Dr Khalid is heading SDPI’s environment and climate change unit. He is also a member of visiting faculty at Fatima Jinnah Women University. Before joining SDPI, he worked with Great Lakes Research Consortium in Syracuse, New York, on developing strategies for enhancing resilience to climate change. He has also worked with the Planning Commission of Pakistan as a capacity building specialist.

Dr Khalid did his PhD in environmental and natural resources policy and received a master’s degree in environmental policy and democratic processes from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, New York.

Dr Aslam’s areas of expertise include natural resource management, ecosystem services assessment and valuations, energy, climate change, water resource management and governance and public-private partnerships. She conducts evidence-based analyses of policy and strategies in energy sector, including on issues of climate change, sustainable models for rural electrification, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

At China Study Center, her work focuses on mainstreaming environmental and climate change aspects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Using her theoretical and practical expertise in research, she provides technical, operational and administrative assistance to the government in developing and implementing CPEC-related projects. Dr Aslam did her PhD in ecology from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and obtained her master’s degree in environmental engineering and sciences from Beijing Institute of technology, China.
Mr Shah has been working in the development sector for over 15 years. At SDPI, his responsibilities include resource mobilization, developing project implementation plans, monitoring and evaluation and quality assurance of research output. He also looks after project budgeting and expenditure with support from other relevant units.

Previously, he has worked with the United Nations World Food Programme, United Nations Development Programme and ActionAid International in various capacities. He also worked with the federal government and has headed Poverty Reduction Monitoring Cell in Planning & Development Department of provincial government in Punjab.

Mr Shah is a PhD candidate at Wageningen University, Netherlands. His research focuses on the political economy of aid interventions in building livelihoods in post conflict areas.

Mr Salik has more than 18 years of experience in research and project management with a diverse range of governmental and non-governmental organisations including National Assembly’s standing committee on climate change.

An agricultural economist, he takes special interest in human development with a focus on socio-economic and climate change issues related to agriculture, ecosystems, migration, water, energy and environment. He is also pursuing his doctoral research at University of Southampton, UK, on human migration caused by environmental and economic reasons.

Ms Qaisrani has more than five years of experience in conducting multidisciplinary research on subjects including, but not limited to, migration, livelihoods, climate change adaptation and gender. She has co-led a multi-country project on climate change and migration and served as gender focal person for a consortium of seven partner organisations. She has also worked with the Oxford Department of International Development as a research officer.

Ms Qaisrani’s work has been published in national and international academic journals as well as in leading Pakistani newspapers.

She holds a master’s degree in migration studies from the University of Oxford, UK. She also received a master’s degree in economics from National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Islamabad.
Brigadier Yasin conducts trainings on generic and specialized subjects and also coordinates the working of SDPI's study group on information technology and telecommunications.

Before joining SDPI, he taught at the military’s School of Signals (now Military College of Signals) and worked at National Institute of Electronics for six years. He also worked as a part of Prime Minister’s Committee for Research and Analysis where he coordinated research on district administration, police systems, dispensation of justice, information technology, education and regional studies. He has written research papers and compiled and edited books as well on these topics. He is a chartered engineer in electronics and is a member of various engineering institutions both inside Pakistan and abroad. He did his bachelor’s degree in war studies and holds a master’s degree in Political Science. He got training in strategic planning and management from York University, Canada.
A writer, archivist and co-founder of South Asian Research and Resource Centre, Ahmad Salim received Pride of Performance, Pakistan’s highest civilian award, in recognition of his contribution in the field of literature in 2010.

He started his professional life at a bank in 1968. He then moved to Lahore and started teaching at Shah Hussain College, a progressive educational institution. Later, he joined National Council of Arts where he worked from 1972 to 1975 at Folklore Research Centre and published material on Punjabi and Sindhi folklore. After completing his bachelor’s in arts from Sindh University, he moved to Karachi in the late 1977. There he wrote reviews of television programs for Urdu language daily Amn.

Born in January 1945 in Miana Gondal village in Punjab province, he has been working with SDPI since 1996.

Prior to joining SDPI, Dr Khwaja held teaching positions at the University of Peshawar, La Trobe University of Science & Technology, Cape Coast, and Kumasi University of Science and Technology, Ghana. He also worked as a subject specialist at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board and as a senior scientific officer with Pakistan Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. Dr Khwaja has over 80 publications to his credit.

He holds/held several honorary positions on executive committees of societies, science associations, international networks, regional/international institutes and the government of Pakistan. He is also a fellow and life-member of Chemical Society of Pakistan, former president of International Society of Doctors for Environment (ISDE), founding steering committee member of International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN) and the winner of World Alliance for Mercury Free Dentistry award for excellence in research as well as chairman’s trophy from Pacific Basin Consortium on Environment and Health for his contributions in research.

Dr Khwaja earned his PhD and MSc in chemistry, respectively, from La Trobe University of Science & Technology, Melbourne, Australia, and University of Peshawar.

Ms Haroon has over 25 years of experience in media and communication. She started her professional career as a reporter with the English language daily The Nation in 1987, later becoming the editor of the newspaper’s midweek magazine. She worked there till 1999 but then joined United Nations Development Program in 2001-02 as a project manager, looking into the portrayal of women in media.

Ms Haroon has been organising SDPI’s annually held SDC since 2003 and has been a part of the team that edits the conference’s anthologies. She holds a master’s degree in communication from the University of Hawaii (1991-1992) and a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Punjab (1985-1987).
Mr Alam has been a journalist for around 28 years. He has worked with a number of prominent news publications after starting his career with Urdu daily Jang’s Sunday magazine in 1992.

He has worked at a number of editorial and reporting positions in English daily The News and its weekly magazine, The News on Sunday. He was also the founding deputy editor of the news website of South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA) and has been the Pakistan correspondent of a Delhi-based English daily, Mail Today.

He joined English language current affairs monthly, the Herald, as its Lahore bureau chief in 2007 and has worked as its editor between June 2010 and July 2019.

He has been working with SDPI since he left the Herald.

Mr Khilji has worked in media and development sectors for about 30 years. Before joining SDPI in 2012, he held senior editorial positions in various English dailies, including Dawn, Daily Times and The Nation. He also worked with a Japanese television channel, NHK, in 2001 and in 2007-09 served as director news at Rohi TV (a regional television network in Saraiki language).

He has a vast experience in advocacy, communications and strategic campaigning and has also worked with Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE), a UNDP project on local government in Pakistan, as media and communication expert in 2010-2012. At SDPI, he is working as senior editor (research publications) along with being the director of Sustainable Development Television (SDTV).

He did his master’s in English Literature from Islamia University Bahawalpur in 1988 and then taught at the same university for more than one year.

Mr Bhatti has more than 15 years of experience of working with development sector and media organisations in managerial and editorial capacities.

He has worked with a diverse set of media outlets including news agencies such as Pakistan Press Associate and Infochange News and Features Network and newspapers like Urdu daily Juraat, Urdu daily Sahafat and English daily Financial Post. He has also worked with an Italian newspaper in Pakistan and with an Urdu language newspaper in England.

He holds a master’s degree in Political Science and works as the head policy outreach and engagement unit at SDPI.

Mr Al Qaisi has been working with SDPI since 2012 as Senior Investigative Journalist.

He has worked with a variety of media organisations over the last 15 years including Dawn, Daily Times, the Express Tribune and the Daily Dunya. He is a frequent contributor to a number of Pakistan’s leading analytical dailies and periodic journals.

Prior to joining SDPI he was a contributing journalist for CNN and Al Jazeera. He is a graduate of the University of Cambridge and has a Master’s Degree from the Lauder Institute of International Law and Diplomacy.
Money matters

Projects

These numbers show the comparative expenditures that SDPI made on running its research projects over the last three years. As is obvious, there was a dip in 2018 as compared to both 2017 and 2019. This was mainly due to the increased government scrutiny into the affairs of many of SDPI's international partners which, therefore, were reluctant to support new projects.

Administration

These numbers show the comparative expenditures that SDPI made on its administrative activities over the last three years. An abrupt increase in these expenses between 2018 and 2019 owes to the launch of many new projects, including a massive Household Survey for National Socio-Economic Registry in Punjab.
The snapshot of a year

This section provides an overview of the projects, activities and tasks performed by all the different units/sections/teams at SDPI in calendar year 2019.
Economic Growth Unit
Lead: Dr Vaqar Ahmed
The main functions of the unit are to carry out research and advocacy-based projects, promote public private collaboration through advocacy, publish research outputs and engage with policy makers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy of Tomorrow South Asia Forum</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The project brings together economic thinkers from Europe and Asia to exchange ideas for developing a socially inclusive, financially sustainable and ecologically dynamic model for economic growth.</td>
<td>To identify an alternative development path and form coalitions for its implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengthening the Use of Evidence for Development Impact (SEDI)</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>A five-year project, it aims at increasing the use of evidence in policy-making in Uganda, Ghana and Pakistan.</td>
<td>To contribute to efficient and effective decision-making; to increase the use of robust evidence directly informing decisions during policy design and implementation; to increase the use of evidence in processes, systems and the working culture in government decision-making structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Pakistan</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The purpose of the project is to explore how Pakistan can move from the quantity of FDI it attracts to its quality as focus shifts to Sustainable Development Goals. The quality of FDI is to be estimated through its impact on inclusive growth, environment/climate change, social justice and overall market.</td>
<td>Purpose of the project is move from quantity to quality as more focus is being transferred to SDGs. In this light, the rational of this exercise is to measure the quality of FDI.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study of Free Trade Agreement between China and Pakistan</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The project explored and assessed the potential gains to Pakistan while trading with China under a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA). It also analyzed the transit trade between the two countries.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishing the Public Private Dialogue Forum (PPDF)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The project aims at establishing and institutionalizing a Public Private Dialogue Forum to facilitate a conversation among stakeholders related to Pakistan’s international trade. The forum will be highlighting trade policy-related issues, providing recommendations for an effective export-friendly environment and suggesting ways and means to ensure equity across multiple sectors and industries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiary Satisfaction Assessment of Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) Programs in Selected Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Under this project, a user/beneficiary satisfaction survey was conducted to assess the impact of various programs implemented by the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) in selected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. It assessed the satisfaction level among the beneficiaries/users of four PPAF interventions: Programs for Poverty Reduction, Development of Hydropower &amp; Renewable Energy Project in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, Livelihood Support &amp; Promotion of Small Community Infrastructure Project and Prime Minister’s Interest Free Loan.</td>
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</table>

**Objectives**

- Documentation and to communicate the proceedings of the forum; to maintain a dedicated webpage for the forum; to disseminate information through presentations, newspaper articles and digital media contents.

**Summary**

- To get people’s perspective in order to assess if and by how much the interventions have achieved their goals; to highlight the contributory factors that resulted in increased satisfaction among users/beneficiaries.
<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan-Pakistan transit-trade through Wagah</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The purpose of the project was to calculate the gain/loss if India is allowed to trade with Afghanistan through Pakistan’s Wagah border instead of using the sea route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence based Policies for the Sustainable Use of Energy Resources in the Asia Pacific Region</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project focused on capacity-building of policymakers in energy modelling techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan’s Quarterly Trade Bulletin</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project analyzed the quarterly economic situation of Pakistan in order to highlight a) Pakistan’s ability to improve business-enabling environment; b) to implement reforms of trade related policies, laws and regulations; and c) to increase the engagement of private sector, academia and civil society in policymaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Evaluation of Strengthening Rule of Law Program in Selected Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The study assessed the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Strengthening Rule of Law Program in Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Swat, Buner, Lower Dir, Upper Dir and Chitral districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The assessment was aimed at evaluating the impact the program has made on state institutions as well as on communities – such as judiciary, police, local government, bar associations, jirgas and civil society organisations – during 2012-18 and making recommendations for its next phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Evaluation of Enterprise Value Chains of Pakistan Microfinance Investment Company (PMIC)</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>This project explores the impact of loans that PMIC has provided to enterprises that have expanded their business from a small scale and, therefore, need loans bigger than the ones available through the providers of micro-finance facilities. It also corresponds to three different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which include SDG-5 (gender equality), SDG-8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG-17 (partnerships for SDGs).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The study assessed the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Strengthening Rule of Law Program in Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Swat, Buner, Lower Dir, Upper Dir and Chitral districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The assessment was aimed at evaluating the impact the program has made on state institutions as well as on communities – such as judiciary, police, local government, bar associations, jirgas and civil society organisations – during 2012-18 and making recommendations for its next phase.

**Objectives**

To examine the effectiveness of micro-finance facilities on the socio-economic conditions of lower income groups; to explore if micro-finance is helping women to improve their socio-economic status.
In 2019, we were able to closely work with federal and provincial governments and other stakeholders on many issues of policy importance. We developed a framework for the localisation of Sustainable Development Goals in Balochistan; we were part of Asian Development Bank’s Country Diagnostic Study in which we led work on assessment of skills development in Pakistan; we proposed a new formula for resource distribution amongst provinces through the upcoming National Finance Commissions; we were part of a working group on 12th five-year plan and closely worked with federal government on growth and investment and financial market and monetary policies for the next five years; we undertook first ever analysis of how household indebtedness in Pakistan affects socio-economic position of households; we also assessed how financial inclusion reduces social exclusion of women and marginalised communities in Pakistan; we also introduced new tools to assess the drivers of household poverty in Pakistan, using data from Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) and showing that a wealth index is a better measure of poverty than income and consumption.
Below is a brief description of the projects carried out by the unit in 2019.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Impact Assessment of Microfinance Plus Interventions for Pakistan</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>It aims at assessing the overall impact of various initiatives launched under Pakistan Microfinance Investment Company (PMIC) Limited. Established in 2015 jointly by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, Karandaaz Pakistan and KfW, a German development bank, it is meant to promote financial inclusion through microfinance institutions. Its initiatives include: Enterprise value chains, education financing and graduation of individuals out of social safety nets. The assessment will look into the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of each initiative. It will document how these interventions meet the priority needs of targeted communities and will also help PMIC make a case for future funding of its interventions.</td>
<td>To quantify the impact of PMIC interventions; to detect whether the interventions have influenced the poverty levels and socio-economic status of the marginalized communities; to establish outcome level benchmarks and then set future targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Framework for SDGs Localisation in Balochistan</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>This project produced i) a framework for the localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Balochistan and ii) an implementation plan for that framework. It involved analyses which mainly include i) an assessment of the progress on SDGs in that province; ii) a review of the existing development trends and practices there; iii) SDGs-related data gap analysis; iv) setting baselines against SDGs targets and associated indicators; and v) identifying targets for priority SDGs for the province.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household borrowing in Pakistan: Conflict and structural indebtedness</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project assessed in what ways people in the conflict zone access and use credit, who are the lenders they approach and what are the terms of borrowing. It also analyzed the consequences of indebtedness on the lives of poor, rural people during and after the conflict and suggested policies that could enable them to have an equitable access to credit and reduce the risks associated with borrowing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devising a Formula for Horizontal Resource Distribution</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project involved the writing of a working paper that proposes a new formula for resource distribution between provinces -- horizontal distribution -- under the upcoming National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. It argues that the formula offered in the 7th NFC Award is predominantly needs-based and whatsoever equity indicators it has fall short of capturing the full essence of equity. It also contends that existing indicators of efficiency – that is, the size of provincial tax revenue -- is not adjusted for the size of the provincial economy and, thus, fails to capture the effort made – of efficiency -- in tax collection.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Human Resources Development in Pakistan

**Status:** Completed

The project involved the writing of a paper that provides strategic guidelines for skill enhancement in Pakistan. It compares the current and future supply of skills with their demand and suggests that Pakistan is facing a skill shortage. It points to two types of mismatch between the supply and demand: i) people have right qualifications/degrees/diplomas/certificates on paper but employer find them unemployable as they lack effective skills and ii) young people educated and trained at certain levels for particular jobs are in short supply. It argues that a bifurcation between formal education and technical and vocational trainings remains the lead cause behind this mismatch.

### Objectives

To serve as the basis for the human resource development agenda of Asian Development Bank in Pakistan; to offer strategic direction that guides human resource development in general and technical and vocational trainings sector in particular.

### Summary

This book chapter seeks to develop a framework through which growth and employment could be accelerate via the contributions of manufacturing sector. It argues that poor manufacturing base is one of the key reasons behind low productivity trap and that creating demand for productive and decent jobs demands a vibrant manufacturing sector.

### Pre-Budget Orientation Workshops for Parliamentarians

**Status:** Completed

The workshops aimed at improving the capacity of parliamentarians to discuss and debate the federal/provincial budgets so that they could exercise an enhanced oversight over the budget making process.

### Objectives

To help parliamentarians to analyze federal/provincial budgets; to create a general understanding among legislators about budget processes, terminology and documentation; to discuss the salient features of federal budget for 2019-20 and offer an overview of 2019-20 budgets of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan; to assess the alignment of budget priorities with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and to provide an orientation on the National Finance Commission (NFC) formula and its implications for provincial budgets.
The program undertakes both research and capacity development in such areas as peacebuilding, community development and countering violent extremism. We have built a network of researchers and academia from various universities and think tanks from Pakistan to conduct research on how community can develop resilience to violent extremism. We have also already engaged private sector in Lahore and Islamabad on building peace and promoting interfaith harmony and are working with private sector in Multan and Karachi for a similar purpose.

We have similarly worked with the Ministry of Defence to hold seminars and conduct research on Pakistan’s key security challenges, particularly those related to Kashmir. And we have also held a national conference on disaster risk reduction which is going to be a priority area for the program team for the next couple of years.
Here are snippets of information about the projects being undertaken by the team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Safe Charity for Businesses in Karachi</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Under this eight-month project, we will map family-led businesses in Karachi and then engage private sector, particularly family-led businesses, so that it follows guidelines by National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and global best practices on giving charity. These businesses will then lead a campaign to create awareness on safe charity practices among smaller businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Kashmir Alive</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The project is undertaking a series of activities, including a mapping of international media content on Indian aggression in Kashmir since August 5, 2019. The findings of this mapping were shared in a roundtable of experts. Two public conferences on the subject have also been planned. Together, these activities will help Pakistan keep the Kashmir issue alive – both nationally and globally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan Community Resilience Research Network</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The project strengthens research activities and build sustainable networks of researchers and thought leaders focused on building community resilience to violent extremism in Pakistan. This is achieved by i) encouraging local and regional knowledge exchange, capacity building, and networking; ii) creating an online portal that builds on informal networks and provides a web-based platform for Pakistani and international experts and researchers to collaborate and enrich their research; and iii) support research and publications related to community resilience through grants and peer-reviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

The project strengthens research activities and build sustainable networks of researchers and thought leaders focused on building community resilience to violent extremism in Pakistan. This is achieved by i) encouraging local and regional knowledge exchange, capacity building, and networking; ii) creating an online portal that builds on informal networks and provides a web-based platform for Pakistani and international experts and researchers to collaborate and enrich their research; and iii) support research and publications related to community resilience through grants and peer-reviews.

Objectives

To provide grant opportunities to the members of the network.
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<tbody>
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<td>Business for Peace</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Building upon the existing relationship between Mian Muhammad Nawaz Shareef University of Agriculture and agriculture industry in Multan, SDPI will train the leadership and management of agriculture businesses about the role they can play in institutionalising activities that promote peace and tolerance among communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Coercion and Grey Hybrid War: Options for Pakistan</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project aimed at making people and policymakers aware of the situation Pakistan is facing due to grey hybrid war and the coercive diplomacy being exercised by some regional and global actors in the South Asian region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic Action – Karachi Universities Cluster Assessment - Karachi and University Cluster - Punjab</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The overall objectives of this project was to conduct a cluster assessment of the interventions carried out in universities in Punjab and Karachi under the ‘university engagement cluster through Community Resilience Activity project implemented by Development Alternatives, Inc (DAI) for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to enhance the capacity of targeted stakeholders on counter violent extremism. We have also conducted a cluster assessment of the youth centers established under the same project to increase youth support for positive civic action and social responsibility.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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We were involved in two major projects in 2019. These are: an air pollution study as part of a regional network; collaboration with Nestle, a multinational food manufacturer, for research and advocacy. In addition, we have been working on policy briefs and working papers that are not part of any particular project and have organised over half a dozen seminars on important themes.

In the latter part of 2019, we also reached out to many partner organisations and responded to many calls for proposals in order to raise funds. The unit, thus, is expected to be carrying out at least two projects in the first half of 2020.
Below is a sketch of the projects carried out by the unit in 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring for Water</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The project focuses on research about on-ground water initiatives such as rain water harvesting and high efficiency irrigation. Advocacy in the form of seminars and stakeholders’ consultations are an important part of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality Report for South Asia</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project synthesized information related to air quality in South Asia and comes up with policy recommendations to improve it. It involved conducting a consultative workshop and key informant interviews with government officials and civil society representatives. It also required us to submit a report on Pakistan’s air pollution situation, with a particular reference to its legal aspects and the institutional hindrances to tackle it.</td>
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</table>

**Objectives**

To establish a baseline in terms of air quality problems in Pakistan.
Sustainable Industrial Development, Chemicals and Health

Lead: Dr Mahmood A. Khwaja
The main purpose of the unit is to work for the development of a sustainable industrial and communication infrastructure through green initiatives, best environmental practices and technologies. It similarly aims at safeguarding public health, especially of children, from hazardous chemicals use and exposure. It also reviews and assesses National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQSs) for a healthy environment and strives for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements on chemicals and health-related issues.

Following is a brief description of the projects and other activities carried out by the unit in 2019.

Follow up was done on research reports on the environment impact assessment of the northern section of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) road route. Articles were written, seminars were organised and the possibility of further research on another part of the same section was discussed with Chinese researchers in 2019.

Laboratory tests/analyses for mercury content were conducted on skin whitening creams. A field survey was carried out in selected cities of Pakistan to exchange information with dental professionals and skin specialists and research-based reports were shared with relevant policymakers. SDPI’s Mercury Research team also met President Dr Arif Alvi at the President House, Islamabad, to discuss a ban on mercury added products in dentistry and cosmetics.

A review of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQSs) was carried out. Their comparative assessment with similar standards in 13 Southeast and South Asian countries as well as with those prescribed by World Health Organization (WHO) was also completed and published. Discussions were held with foreign experts to develop a national implementation plan to phase out hazardous chemicals - Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) – as well as an updated inventory/Minamata Initial Assessment to respectively support the implementation of Stockholm Convention on POPs and Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The unit faced many obstacles in its work last year. These include:

- lack of access to Chinese researchers/scientists for data collection and information sharing on CPEC projects
- little funding support from outside SDPI
- difficulties in access to government officials in Punjab and Sindh provinces
- lack of research and local data on mercury exposure and public health, especially of children, pregnant/breast-feeding females and elderly people
- lack of awareness on the impact of exposure to chemicals
- high cost of laboratory tests/analyses
- slow pace of work at government offices
- lack of adequate chemicals specific national legislation
- technical difficulties in establishing common criteria for comparative assessment of NEQS
- increasing funding constraints for civil society/non-government organisations for research and advocacy.
The unit is carrying out two projects -- South Asia Migration and Climate and Promoting Protection and Solidarity for Climate Migrants and Displaced communities in South Asia -- at two climatic hotspots: Punjab’s Muzaffargarh district where consecutive floods between 2010 and 2012 displaced both rural and urban communities; and Mithi town in Sindh’s Tharparkar district where droughts often lead to large scale population migration. The projects will come to an end in December 2020.
Over ten parliamentarians have been engaged in lobbying for improved legislation on tobacco and smoking. Over half a dozen seminars and conferences have been organised on some important themes related to tobacco and smoking such as Graphic Health Warning (GHW) and industrial influence and plain packaging etc.
Center for Private Sector Engagement

Lead: Engr. Ahad Nazir
Established in 2019, the center seeks to research out to private sector on such topics as tax reforms, trade reforms, social entrepreneurship and trade facilitation etc. It also oversees Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) Forum which now has a national reach via the National Network of Economic Think-Tanks. It similarly partners with private sector stakeholders in sectors of mutual interest and runs capacity building programs.

**The center has carried out**

- surveys on the custom schemes for exporters and re-exporters
- a survey on the quality of foreign capital
- a baseline survey on creative and inclusive economy
- research on the economic cost of grid tripping in wind power plants
- public private dialogue series on business regulations
- advocacy activities on renewable energy reforms in collaboration with Engro Corporation.

The center also joined hands with Center for Global Innovators, National University of Modern Languages, National University of Sciences and Technology and Epiphany Pakistan for various capacity-building programs.
Given below is a brief description of the center’s work in 2019

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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</table>
| Developing Inclusive and Creative Economy: Policy Component         | Ongoing   | Past research by British Council and SDPI shows that there is a clear gap in perspectives that private businesses, social and creative enterprises and government functionaries have over public policy. The center aims at bridging this gap through a concerted effort that focuses on the following:  
  - updating the existing literature on social and creative enterprises  
  - conducting deep-dive survey-based research in tax and regulatory regimes applicable to social and creative enterprises  
  - reviewing primary and secondary data to estimate the contribution of creative and social enterprises to economy  
  - doing in-depth interviews with relevant policymakers  
  - holding public-private dialogues and creating awareness so that all stakeholders understand each other’s perspectives. |
| Stakeholder Network of National Economic Think-Tanks                | Ongoing   | The rationale for this project is to integrate the work being carried out by economic think-tanks and research/advocacy organisations operating in different sectors of the economy as well as in different parts of the country. The activities envisaged under this initiative include:  
  - focus group discussions  
  - quarterly meetings of network members for improving collaborations and coordination  
  - public-private dialogues to create awareness on economic issues  
  - briefings to the member of the parliament’s standing committees to generate political consensus on economic issues |
| A Survey of Garment Exporters on Custom Schemes                     | Completed | The project consisted of a study that explores Pakistan’s trade policy and the access provided to exporters to imported components. It examined three primary schemes – duty drawback, duty and tax remission for exporters, manufacture in bond -- designed to give exporters timely access to imported inputs at world prices.  
  The project involved a survey of the following groups:  
  - Exporters, both direct and indirect, who use any of the three schemes;  
  - Exporters, both direct and indirect, who do not use, but potentially could use, any of the three schemes.  
  The results of the survey were then validated through focus group discussions. |

**Objectives**

To do a mapping of readymade garment exporters; to develop a list of the users of the custom schemes by using data from the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR); to examine the structure and growth of readymade garment exports.
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistan Investment Quality Survey</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project comprised a perception survey to assess the impact of recent inflows and outflows of foreign investment. The respondents included two sets of Pakistani businesses: Those who have received foreign investment recently; and those who have not.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<td>To look at the long-term quality of investment and to find out if foreign investment is contributing to job creation and social development.</td>
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<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
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<td>Stakeholder Meeting on Non-Tariff Measures</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The meeting was conducted in July 2019 to share the findings of a World Bank study on Non-Tariff Measures with key stakeholders the Ministry of Commerce and private businesses involved in imports and exports.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<td>Its main objective was to identify regulatory and procedural constraints being faced by exporters and importers.</td>
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<td><strong>Summary</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Symposium on Tax Reforms in Pakistan</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The symposium held in October 2019 involved various stakeholders who discussed various aspects of tax reforms in Pakistan. The main agenda points included:</td>
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<td>• tax mobilization effort required under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) program</td>
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<td>• tax harmonization across different levels of government</td>
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<td>• identification of the role of private sector in helping improve tax compliance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ease of Doing Business: A case for tax harmonization in Pakistan</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project comprised of conducting a panel discussion during the 22nd Sustainable Development Conference in December 2019. The panel discussed the stance of federal and provincial revenue authorities with regard to tax harmonization and identified the legislative and administrative efforts required to harmonize the tax regime across provinces. It also analyzed the perceptions of private sector regarding various tax authorities and explored the role of development partners in facilitating the creation of an efficient tax regime which will eventually improve Pakistan’s ease of doing business ranking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable Energy Reforms in Pakistan: An Appraisal</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Held as a dinner plenary during the 22nd Sustainable Development Conference in December 2019, the project brought together public and private sector stakeholders to discuss the impact of energy mix and energy prices on both domestic and business users. The participants discussed various options for reforming the energy sector and also identified the multiple impediments in this regard.</td>
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</table>
China Study Center  Lead: Dr Hina Aslam

The center aims at making environmental issues and climate change as central aspects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects, particularly with a view to achieve sustainable development. It also works to bridge research-policy gap on issues of global relevance such as trade, technology, environmental conservation and management, climate change, tourism, finance and China-Pakistan relations. Following is a brief description of the work done by the center so far.

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<tr>
<td>Evidence Based Policies for Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The project aimed at developing an assessment report drawn largely from the information provided by countries in Asia and the Pacific region. It also required the preparation of a policy brief on Pakistan’s energy modelling capacities to meet the requirements of nationally determined contributions to greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris Agreement.</td>
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Since its inception in 1998, Center for Learning and Development (CLD) has conducted more than 950 workshops for more than 650 public institutions, national non-government organisations, international non-government organisations, academia and United Nations institutions. It has also trained more than 16,000 professionals, out of which 40 per cent are women. The Centre has also conducted a number of Study Group Meetings on IT and Telecom Sector.
The Centre is a part of learning and development joint ventures involving many multilateral and bilateral development organisations. It is known for its participatory training methodologies based on research and learning by doing. It engages the highly professional national and international resource persons and trainers to provide high quality trainings. To design its workshops to cater the need of organisations and institutions, CLD conducts an annual survey to identify the market’s needs and to design its training workshops accordingly. It also provides full and partial discount packages to students and other talented individuals including women and the members of transgender community.

The center offers mainly three types of learning programs:

- Customized workshops and retreats for institutions and organisations
- Open enrollment workshops for high tech professionals
- International leadership and research study tours and workshops.

In 2019, it conducted eight in-house workshops, 14 national workshops and five Hum Pakistani National Workshops on national integration and inter-faith harmony. The last of these training categories was organised in collaboration with Center for Social Reconstruction at Allama Iqbal Open University and the federal Ministry of Communications. Its trainees included district management staff, local government representatives and employees at academic institutions.

Over the last eight years, the center has also signed more than 36 Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), agreements and partnerships with universities, international organisations and research institutions for collaboration in learning and development. During 2019, MOUs have been signed with the following institutions:

- University of Lahore’s Center for Sustainability Research and Practice
- National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad
- Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services, Islamabad
- Federal Urdu University, Islamabad
- Pakistan Stone Development Company, Federal Ministry of Industries and Production, Government of Pakistan
- Institute of Customer Management, United Kingdom
- The Skills Enhancement Academy, United Kingdom
A repository of information on all the research-related activities in SDPI, the unit works for branding and profiling of the organisation among policy and donor communities. It also provides different platforms to SDPI staff for presenting and discussing new research ideas/outputs and monitors the progress of research projects to ensure their quality and timeliness.

Research Coordination Unit conducted a strategic planning meeting in January 2019 mainly to discuss weaknesses and threats that may impact SDPI’s productivity. It also launched a centralized online reporting system in 2019 to improve the staff’s productivity.

In July 2019, the unit organised a Policy Research and Advocacy Meeting to discuss updates about and plans for SDPI’s research and advocacy activities. It also conducted eight Brown Bag Research Meetings where researchers shared their innovative ideas for research with their peers and got their feedback.
In 2018, an update of National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) was rolled out. It was originally established after a national level Poverty Score Card (PSC) survey was conducted in 2010-11 to document socio-economic and welfare status of almost 27 million households to find those eligible for cash transfers and other benefits under Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP). To make the implementation of the rollout easy, the whole of Pakistan was divided into eight geographical clusters. In 2019, SDPI was given the task of updating the registry in Cluster 2 -- consisting of 11 districts with an estimated 5.3 million households – and Cluster 3 – that consists of 10 districts with an estimated 4.4 million households.

SDPI is carrying out a door to door survey in these districts – all located in central and/or south Punjab. It is in the process of engaging 8,000 persons to accomplish the task which involves the following:

- development of 68,780 GIS-based maps for all 21 districts
- development of training material for all survey categories
- capacity-building of all staff
- social mobilisation through seminars at district and tehsil levels, opening meetings at union council level, corner meetings, meetings with influential persons, meetings with masjid imams, distribution of public information campaign material and pasting of a poster on every 10th door
- traversing of every enumeration area; door marking for every household
- collection of quality data with 100 % coverage.
The unit promotes sustainable development through multiple public engagement tools. It disseminates and propa-
gates SDPI’s work on policy research and policy critique and carries out networking activities both within and outside
Pakistan. It engages with academia, researchers, civil society groups, political parties and international development
institutions on the one hand and private sector businesses, legislators, administrators and policymakers on the other.

Over time, the unit’s work has helped SDPI gain both an unparalleled access to and a direct participation in poli-
cymaking processes which, in turn, have been used for achieving the following objectives:

- to nudge the government to formulate a new policy where none exists;
- to push for the review, revision and reform of existing policies to make them inclusive, representative and transparent;
- to call for an effective implementation of policies after they have been formed.

The unit’s unique contribution in these endeavours has been to champion the cause of the poor and the marginalised and to de-
mand policies that empower people rather than exploit and disenfranchise them. It is engaged in two types of advocacy: reactive
and proactive. The former consists of raising a voice whenever fundamental freedoms and civil liberties are under stress; the
latter involves the use of evidence-based research to lobby the government for a review, revision and reform of its policies.

To achieve these objectives in 2019, the unit arranged a large number of activities. These include:

- 27 Monday seminars
- 12 consultations and round table sessions
- eight lectures/talks
- nine report/book launches
- three media briefings
- one keynote address
- one policy symposium
- one conference.

These events took up a whole host of issues related to sustainable development and brought together leading global,
regional and national research scholars, think-tankers, activists, legislators and policymakers.
Sustainable Development Television (SDTV) is a web-based broadcasting outlet and content production facility owned and operated by SDPI. It has been around since 2011 but it started 24-hour transmissions only in 2019. These transmissions comprise a recorded loop updated regularly. This loop keeps getting new input every day, replacing the ones that become old and irrelevant. The contents being broadcast through this loop include SDPI’s Monday seminars, special lectures and training workshops. SDTV also conducts news analysis, talk shows and interviews which, too, become a part of the 24-hour broadcasting loop – as do news packages and documentaries produced by its own staff.

The number of the television’s subscribers has crossed 800 in the last year. SDPI’s social media team also disseminate its contents to a large audience including academia, media and government employees and the representatives of international donors/development partners.
Consisting of one of the biggest collections of research material in Pakistan’s entire development sector, Ahmad Salim Resource Center possesses 35,000 books, journals/magazines and other documents. Additionally, it has a large pool of digital contents and many online resources pertaining to such areas as development, environment, economic growth, education, gender, social sector, agriculture and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It also has a separate section dedicated to government’s data publications.

Every year, the center receives more than 110 publications, including journals, periodicals, newsletters and daily/weekly newspapers/magazine. It is also part of a loan program involving libraries in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore and a publication exchange facility that includes 100 research organisations and universities such as Higher Education Commission and World Bank.

The center provides its entire trove to general public, students, academia and research scholars for free. To facilitate the academia and development sector further, the entire SDPI knowledge bank is also going online. Many parts of it are already available on the internet, allowing access to it and downloading facilities through registration and subscription.

Since 2011, the center’s Urdu publication unit has been bringing out two journals, Dharti and Paidar Taraqee, regularly besides publishing translations, books and research reports.
The yearly charrette

Since the late 1990s, SDPI has been holding an annual Sustainable Development Conference (SDC). Over time, the conference has acquired an identity of its own as one of the most sought after get togethers of politicians, policymakers, donors, researchers, academicians and development practitioners not just from Pakistan but also from abroad. Conducted by a specialized SDC unit, each conference is organised towards the end of a calendar year usually around a single theme.

Lead: Uzma Tariq Haroon
SDC’s 21st edition, held on 4-7 December 2018 in Islamabad, was attended by 261 delegates. Out of these, 57 were foreigners who came from such countries as Afghanistan, Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Germany, Kenya, Maldives, France, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, the Philippines, United Kingdom and the United States. The conference, which discussed various aspects of its overarching theme, *Corridors of Knowledge for Peace and Development*, attracted more than 4,000 people to its various sessions and plenaries on the whole.

The speakers and panelists at the conference offered a big picture view of different issues related to the creation and sharing of knowledge for peace building and socio-economic improvements. They mostly focused on such subjects as human capital, social exclusion, poverty alleviation, Fourth Industrial Revolution, unfair laws and legal systems, discriminatory fiscal rules and regulations, the need for and absence of regional transport networks, climate change, hyper-nationalism, human rights and violence against women. They explored the causes and effects of these issues, explaining how they defined -- and were also defined by -- public policies everywhere in the world in general and South Asia in particular.

A major feature of SDC 2018 was the 11th South Asia Economic Summit 2018 which focused on various political economy issues pertaining to South Asia. While the plenary sessions of the summit discussed ways and means to strengthen a broad-based dialogue among the member countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc), its concurrent sessions took up the problems and prospects of business-to-business and people-to-people connectivity. The panelists and discussants at the event explored as to how trade and investment value chains, regional trade in services, cooperation in energy and water sectors and joint mechanisms to tackle the impact of climate change could be create and strengthened through regional collaboration and cooperation.

The summit, being held every year since 2008 in one Saarc country or the other, is a joint initiative of five eminent think tanks working in the region. These include South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment, Nepal, Center for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India, Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka, and SDPI, Pakistan. SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industries and South Asia Center for Policy Studies are also regular partners in this annual effort which shares its output with all the governments in the region through their foreign ministries as well as through SAARC Secretariat.

The research papers presented at SDC 2018 and the 11th South Asia Economic Summit have been published jointly by SDPI and Sang-e-Meel Publications, Lahore, as an anthology titled *Corridors of Knowledge for Peace and Development*. This anthology was launched at SDC in December 2019 and can be downloaded free from the link below:

Federal rail minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad at SDC 2018
SDC 2019: Sustainable Development in a Digital Society

The latest edition of SDC was held on 2-5 December 2019 in Islamabad. Inaugurated by President of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi, it aimed at exploring the subject of Sustainable Development in a Digital Society.

Many federal ministers, senior government officials, foreign ambassadors, representatives of donor agencies, researchers, academia and the members of development community participated in the four-day event. Out of its 225 panelists, 33 came from 16 countries other than Pakistan. These included Afghanistan, China, Finland, France, Germany, India, Iran, Italy, Maldives, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States. It featured 35 sessions – including six plenaries and 29 concurrent panels and roundtables – and attracted an audience of more than 3,500 people.

The speakers and panelists at the conference explored and explained as to how rapid advances in information and communication technologies, artificial intelligence and various other aspects of the Fourth Industrial Revolution were shaping and changing human societies – both for the better and the worse. They weighed the pros and cons of these technologies, too, in terms of their impact on sustainable socio-economic development.

Most of them also highlighted how the latest developments in information and communication technologies as well as in artificial intelligence could empower people to interact and collaborate with each other in a much faster and smoother manner in various sectors of economy and society. The humanity, they argued, could now work together more efficiently and more effectively on addressing such problems as environmental degradation, climate change, poverty and inequality across and within countries, social and gender injustices, healthcare and pandemics, extremism and violence. But they also warned that digital technologies could easily lead to individualization, social and cultural disruptions, a self-centered consumerist culture, intolerance, populism and xenophobia which, in turn, could further threaten the already vulnerable economic, ecological and cultural fabric of the human society.

The participants of the conference, in the same vein, looked at how digital technologies, in many ways, were already contributing towards environmental, economic, cultural and political inclusiveness and cooperation. They simultaneously delved into how these were also creating a digital divide between those who have access to all the modern information and communication infrastructure and those who do not. Those individuals, communities and societies which are already suffering from some disadvantages or the other – such as ethnic and religious minorities, women, the uneducated and the unemployed – are highly likely to be further excluded and isolated as a result of an uneven spread of the digital revolution. They, therefore, suggested that individuals, communities and countries make the best use of the opportunities being offered by the revolutionary developments in information and communication technologies but at the same time be aware of, and also preempt and prevent, the dangers inherent in those.
The policy recommendations made during the conference included:

- bridging the digital divide by bringing in communities and people at the peripheries of economies and polities into the digital sphere through special allocations of money;
- retraining bureaucracies and civil servants so that they can use digital technology as a means to fast-track decision-making and increase their productivity;
- ensuring the safety, maintenance and efficacy of digital technologies in order to prevent their misuse particularly against the vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged individuals and communities;
- transforming the existing manual workers into a knowledge-driven labor force;
- establishing strong linkages between the academia and the industry;
- using smart and efficient technologies to enhance transparency and accountability of the state institutions;
- developing a global cooperation mechanism in order to reap the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution;
- promoting openness, democratisation and the empowerment of citizens through a responsible and high-quality journalism which could be especially deployed as a means to tackle fake news and sophisticated disinformation campaigns.
SDPI staff with President Dr Arif Alvi
# Annexure: Projects and partners in 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects/Activities</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Focal Persons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 Human Resources Development in Pakistan</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
<td>Dr. Sajid Amin Javed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02 Country Diagonistic Studies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>03 C2 &amp; C3 - National Rollout of National Socio Economic Registry Update</td>
<td>Benazir Income Support Program</td>
<td>Rana Nazir Ahmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 Dice Government and Policy Component</td>
<td>British Council</td>
<td>Dr. Vaqar Ahmed &amp; Ahad Nazir</td>
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<tr>
<td>05 Surveying Social and Creative Enterprises</td>
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<td>06 Assessment of Malnutrition in Lactating Women and Children</td>
<td>CHIP</td>
<td>Rana Nazir Ahmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>07 Consultation meeting with Legislators</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moazzam Sharif Bhatti</td>
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<tr>
<td>08 Study of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor - Status</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dr. Vaqar Ahmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09 Corporate social responsibility for winning hearts and minds</td>
<td>Development Alternatives, Inc.</td>
<td>Dr. Shafqat Munir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Economy of Tomorrow South Asia Forum</td>
<td>Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)</td>
<td>Dr. Vaqar Ahmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 CARIA - Pathways to Resilience in Semi-Arid Economies (PRISE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Case Study Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Leadership, Management and Governance support for Think Tanks</td>
<td>International Development Research Centre</td>
<td>Dr. Abid Suleri &amp; Dr Vaqar Ahmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 MEAL - Strengthening learning alliances for research quality in SA</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Strategy for research policy engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Think Tank Initiative (TTI) Phase II Institutional Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Davos 2019 Report Launch &amp; Public Forum Launch</td>
<td>OXFAM</td>
<td>Moazzam Sharif Bhatti</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Palladium - Pre-Election Advocacy for Addressing Citizen’s Health Demand</td>
<td>UKAID</td>
<td>Rana Nazir Ahmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 User/Beneficiary Satisfaction Survey</td>
<td>Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund</td>
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<td>20 PPDF</td>
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<td>21 Quarterly Trade Bulletin</td>
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<td>22 Evidence based policies for the Sustainable use of resources in Asia and The Pacific</td>
<td>UNESCAP</td>
<td>Dr Vaqar / Dr. Hina</td>
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<td>23 Innovative climate finance mechanism for FI</td>
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<td>Projects/Activities</td>
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<td>24 Development of SDGs Framework for Balochistan</td>
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<td>25 Impact Evaluation SRLP</td>
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<td>26 Mainstreaming, Accelerating and policy support for SDGs</td>
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<td>27 Pre Budget Orientation Workshop</td>
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<td>31 Study of Climate Risk and Food Security in Pakistan</td>
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<td>United States Department of State</td>
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<td>48 Strengthening the Use of Evidence for Development Impact (SEDI)</td>
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<td>49 FTA Study between China and Pakistan</td>
<td>Beaconhouse National University</td>
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<td>High Commission of Canada to Pakistan</td>
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<td>Bloomberg</td>
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<td>60 SDC Session</td>
<td>Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad</td>
<td>Shahid Minhas</td>
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### Additional Partners

- Accountability Lab
  - Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South
  - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)
  - Embassy of France
  - Higher Education Commission (HEC)
  - International Labour Organization (ILO)
  - International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
  - Ministry of Water Resources, Government of Pakistan
  - Pakistan U.S Alumni Network (PUAN)
  - United States Institute of Peace

- Uzma T Haroon
This annual report has been written, compiled and edited by Muhammad Badar Alam and Hassan Murtaza Syed. Its layout and design have been developed by Malik Aziz and the photos included in it have been taken by Nadir Badshah.