

ACTIVITY REPORT

This report summarizes the activities of
The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) for the period

July - September 2023

Fiscal Year 2023-24

Major Advocacy Activities & Events During The Quarter

The major advocacy activities of the Pakistan Business Council and its workings for the quarter under review are summarized below:

Visit of the Caretaker Finance Minister to the PBC



The Caretaker Finance Minister, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar visited the PBC for a meeting with the PBC Board. The PBC emphasized its stated position that the FBR needs to aggressively work to increase the taxbase. It restated its earlier position that short-term front-loaded IMF programs are counterproductive and that it is important to ensure that the next program incorporates structural changes, especially in the energy and fiscal policies.

PBC Meeting with Caretaker Commerce Minister



A PBC delegation led by its chairman called on the Caretaker Minister of Commerce, Mr. Gohar Ejaz. The PBC team requested him to ensure parity in energy rates for Pakistani exporters with those available in competitor countries. The delegation also requested the Caretaker Minister for taking urgent steps to reduce leakages in the Afghan Transit Trade by restricting imports meant for Afghanistan through quantitative and qualitative measures as well as better enforcement at the borders. It also recommended a “whole-of-government” approach for exports to overcome inter-ministerial fragmentation.



PBC Meeting with the Caretaker Minister for Energy



A PBC delegation led by its chairman, called on the Caretaker Minister for Energy, Mr. Muhammad Ali. The PBC delegation pointed out that industry is rendered uncompetitive by high power tariffs because of charges for unutilised generation capacity, line losses, theft, non-recovery and cross subsidies to domestic consumers. It recommended that lower tariffs for industry can help absorb capacity charges and be justified through positive contribution to jobs, tax revenue, exports and import avoidance. The delegation also stressed the need to optimize foreign currency outflow through indigenization of fuel, private sector investment in transmission and renegotiation of loan terms. The Minister for Energy requested the PBC to provide a framework for reforms. He also sought nominations for independent director positions on the boards of DISCOs.

PBC Meeting with the Director General SIFC



A chairman led PBC delegation called on the Director General of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The delegation highlighted the need for addressing significant flaws in the investment climate that impede local investment and which in turn discourage foreign investment. The SIFC requested PBC to provide recommendations on reforms.

PBC Meeting with Commerce Minister & Secretary Commerce



A PBC delegation led by its Chairman called on the Federal Commerce Minister and the Secretary Commerce in July 2023. The purpose of the visit was to make the Minister aware of the PBC's concerns regarding the fast-tracking of the Pakistan-UAE CEPA. In addition, the PBC Chairman pointed out that the National Tariff Commission (NTC) was dysfunctional as the quorum was incomplete.

PBC Meeting with the Secretary Commerce



A PBC delegation led by its director Mr. Taimur Dawood called on the Secretary Commerce to sensitize him on the topics that the PBC planned to take up in its meeting with Caretaker Minister of Commerce. The purpose of the meeting was to allow the Ministry to brief the Caretaker Commerce Minister in advance on the GoP's position on the various issues which were expected to be taken up at the PBC's meeting with the Caretaker Commerce Minister.

Visit of the World Bank Group to the PBC



A delegation from the World Bank Group (WBG) which included the Country Director World Bank & the Head of IFC in Pakistan visited the PBC. The visit was part of the WBG's initiative "Reforms for a Brighter Future". The discussions at the PBC centered around four reform areas: a) Transforming the Private Sector, b) Unleashing the Agri-Food sector & c) Achieving Sustainable Energy, d) Strengthening Government Revenues

The PBC presented its viewpoint on these reform areas.

Visit of Commercial Attache – Embassy of Japan



Mr. Tadayoshi Hiraki the Commercial Attache at the Japanese Embassy in Pakistan visited the PBC. The purpose of the visit was to seek ways to improve commercial ties between Japan & Pakistan.

Visit of Deputy Chief of Mission – Embassy of Japan



Mr. Ito, Deputy Chief at the Japanese Embassy in Islamabad accompanied by Ms. Mina Ari-Ito CEO of ZENMONDO Co., visited the PBC to better understand the startup culture in Pakistan and to explore how Japanese companies could be a part of the startup eco-system in Pakistan.

Visit of World Economic Forum (WEF) delegation to the PBC



A delegation from the World Economic Forum (WEF) which is part of their Digital FDI project for the Board of Investment, visited the PBC for consultations with the PBC management on how to make the project most relevant from Pakistan's perspective.

PBC meeting with the Member Customs - EFS



A PBC team led by its Director Research called on the Member Customs – Policy at the FBR to discuss proposed changes in the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS). Advocacy on the proposed amendments to the EFS is an ongoing activity at the PBC.

PBC Meeting with the Additional Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The PBC Director Research called on the Additional Secretary Middle East to brief him on the PBC's concerns regarding the signing of the proposed UAE-Pakistan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

PBC Meeting with the Engineering Development Board



The Director Research PBC accompanied by the Resident Director Islamabad, called on the CEO EDB to discuss plans for joint research in FY'24. It was agreed between the EDB CEO and the Director Research PBC that the first joint PBC/EDB study in FY'24 would be on "Recycling of Non-Ferrous Metals". It was also agreed that EDB would approach the Caretaker Minister of Industries to be the Chief Guest at the launch event of the PBC/EDB Study on The Export Competitiveness of Aluminum Utensils manufactured in Pakistan.

PBC Meeting with JS South East Asia – MoC



The Director Research held a meeting with the Joint Secretary Foreign Trade (South East Asia) to discuss Pakistan's participation in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The Director Research shared a copy of the PBC commissioned report: Positioning Pakistan for Integration with Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). It was agreed at the meeting that the PBC would continue to provide research support to the Ministry of Commerce.

CEO's Participation in Meetings & Webinars

The PBC CEO participated in the following meetings, events, webinars to promote the PBC's agenda:



Attended a number of briefing sessions on the economy for the Caretaker Minister of Finance.



Attended a dinner with H.E. Aybek Areif Usmanov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan.



Dinner with H.E. Jane Marriott, British High Commissioner to Pakistan.



Speaker/panelist at the PIDE/World Bank Reforms for Brighter Future seminar at the Karachi University.



Ms. Henny de Vries, the Ambassador of the Netherlands called on the CEO to discuss the economy.



Provided input to the partners of August Leadership, a US based global diversity practice on how boards function in Pakistan.



Met Ms. Esther Ruiz Perez, the IMF Representative for Pakistan to discuss progress on the SBA.



Briefed Ms. Sarah Mooney, the British Deputy High Commissioner on the state of the economy



Addressed the National Foods team at "The Glass Room" session on inspirational leadership.



Attended a talk by Bob Sternfels, Global Managing Partner McKinsey & Company organized by Engro Corp.



Zoom session with Zod.Media UK on potential of modest fashionwear exports to the UK.

Meetings/Visits by Resident Director Islamabad

S. No.	Name of Person Visited	Purpose	
1	Mr. Jamil Qureshi Secretary SIFC	Handed over PBC's budget proposals.	
2	Mr. Adnan Munir, Director PRMI BOI	Preparation for organizing PRMI Hackathon with regulators	
3	Mr. Ashfaq Memon Joint Technology Adviser	Regular follow-up on harmonization of food standards	
4	National Security Division Roundtable at National Institute of Maritime Affairs	Presented PBC's perspectives on priorities for economic revival	
6	Mr. Asim Ayaz DG Policy, EDB	Discussed findings of PBC's report on Electric Vehicles	
8	Dr. M. Tariq PD Oilseeds Project NARC	Updated on the implementation of the Olive Culture project	
9	Dr. Uzma Zia PIDE	Discussed the cost impact of regulations affecting imports and exports.	

Internal Workings of The PBC

88th PBC Board of Directors Meeting

The 88th PBC Board of Directors Meeting was held on August 4th, 2023 at the PBC. The Board elected Mr. Shabbir Diwan as the Chairman for the balance period of the board ending in February 2025. The board appreciated the contribution of the outgoing Chairman Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb and elected Ms. Zeelaf Munir as the next Vice-Chairperson of the PBC.

Press & Media Coverage

DAWN

SIFC's task

Ehsan Malik

September 23, 2023

THE Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is a civil-military initiative to cut red tape and create an investment climate conducive to new investment. For long, the silo-working of ministries, fragmentation between the federation and provinces and U-turns in policies have combined to hurt business. So has weak political will to take courageous actions to level the playing field with the informal sector.

Indeed, there is a perverse consensus among political parties to retain the status quo on a narrow tax base, loss-making SOEs, circular debt and high government expenditure. IMF programmes have also been short-sighted in setting front-loaded targets that address the symptoms instead of the root causes.

Tax targets set by the IMF are met by taxing the taxed, not by broadening the tax base. Energy tariffs are raised to manage the circular debt instead of addressing the causes — inadequate transmission, inefficiencies and theft.

However, the IMF is not to be blamed for our apathy. By failing to mobilise resources to invest meaningfully in human capital, Pakistan ranks at the bottom in South Asia in virtually every socioeconomic measure. Even more serious, not only does the country suffer from twin deficits on external and fiscal accounts, we now have a third deficit: one of trust within and between institutions. In this scenario, the SIFC is not a solution looking for problems; there are plenty of them to sort, foremost among which are fiscal and energy policies.

Consistency has never been the hallmark of Pakistan's fiscal policy. To successfully create an investment-friendly climate, the SIFC will need to ensure equitable and consistent tax policies. Corporate investors must not be taxed at rates higher than unincorporated businesses.

Taxpayers, especially listed companies, should not be required to pay minimum tax on turnover, and neither should businesses in SEZs during their tax holiday period. As businesses that grow, their taxable profit also generates higher tax revenues; they must not be penalised through the super tax. Once a tax concession is given, it should not be withdrawn before the expiry of the term.

A professionally resourced SIFC is a pragmatic solution.

Tax provisions governing the formation of groups through holding companies were first introduced in 2008. They were withdrawn in 2016, restored in 2019 and withdrawn again in 2021.

As a result, contrary to global practice, intercorporate dividends are taxed at multiple levels, raising the effective tax rate for shareholders in holding companies. This impedes the scale and widening of shareholding. Taxpayers must not be harassed. Wealth creation should be respected and encouraged.

Cash in circulation which represents 28 per cent of the money supply and is used to evade taxes must be discouraged. Industry, which represents 20pc of GDP cannot continue to be burdened with 56pc of taxes while retail and wholesale contribute significantly below their share of GDP.

Agriculture and urban properties need to be taxed. Under-invoicing must be curbed, like smuggling has now started to be. Misuse of the Afghan transit trade which denies tax revenues and impacts domestic manufacturing must be controlled.

Energy tariffs for industry the world over are lower than for other consumers. In Pakistan, industrial tariff is loaded with charges for unutilised generation capacity, line losses, theft, non-recovery and cross subsidies. As a result, industry is rendered uncompetitive and fresh investment in energy-intensive sectors such as petrochemicals remains unfeasible.

With unutilised generation capacity, especially in winter, lower tariffs for industry can help absorb capacity charges. Justification for industrial tariff should be based on the positive contribution of industry to jobs, tax revenue, exports and import avoidance.

“Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold” is how Yeats described a state of helplessness. A professionally resourced SIFC is a pragmatic solution that can remove the sense of helplessness prevailing in the country.

Its success should not be measured just by the number or size of investments but by the change it brings in the investment climate and how quickly it institutionalises better ways of working and renders itself obsolete.

The best ambassadors of investment are existing investors. Foreign investors seldom enter sectors that local investors shy away from.

There are some other points. SIFC must focus on sectors generating exports or reducing imports. Pakistan's food security must be prioritised. Joint ventures and partial sale will ensure that a part of future profits stay in the country. Strategic interests such as mining should be protected.

Investors must also bring new technology and knowhow. Competitive bidding will strengthen credibility and improve inflows. For all this, the SIFC will need professional resources.

The writer is CEO of the Pakistan Business Council.

DAWN

Pakistan Business Council seeks a strategy to bolster competitiveness

September 20, 2023

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) has called upon the commerce ministry to devise a comprehensive package aimed at streamlining crucial factors such as electricity, gas, and labour to bolster the overall competitiveness of local industries.

In a high-level meeting chaired by Caretaker Commerce Minister Gohar Ejaz, the PBC put forth its demands and a comprehensive discussion took place regarding the strategies and initiatives aimed at bolstering international trade, fostering export growth, and enhancing the overall business environment in Pakistan.

An official announcement issued after the meeting said that the PBC proposed recommendations to tackle crucial challenges and capitalise on potential opportunities in the country's economic sphere. The PBC highlighted various measures to address the prevailing issues in Pakistan's economic landscape.

The PBC underscored the significance of streamlining vital factors such as electricity, gas, and labour to boost the overall competitiveness of industries. The PBC emphasised the significance of the IT sector and urged shifting focus from commodities to value addition and branding.

During the meeting, the participants delved into the topic of enhancing international trade and facilitating business operations.

The minister Mr Ejaz expressed his unwavering commitment to fostering economic growth and facilitating trade. He assured that regional trade would be facilitated through proper channels to bolster regional economic ties. He called on the members of PBC to come forward and play their due role in formalising the economic activities. Mr Ejaz also reaffirmed the government's commitment to combating smuggling activities, ensuring a level playing field for legitimate businesses. "I will visit every industrial city and make every industry functional," he said.

The commerce minister also outlined his commitment to opening up new markets, increasing IT exports, and promoting e-commerce to boost Pakistan's GDP. He also mentioned plans for organizing trade exhibitions and securing concessions from trade partners.



Pakistan Business Council seeks more reforms in next IMF programme

September 24, 2023

KARACHI: The Pakistan Business Council (PBC), a business advocacy group, met with finance minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar to discuss the economic situation and the measures taken by the interim government to stabilise the economy.

The meeting, which lasted for two and a half hours, discussed various issues related to economy, taxation, power, exports and foreign investment.

"The Pakistan Business Council was reassured that the measures taken by the interim government will stabilize the economy," the PBC said in a statement.

The PBC appreciated the determined action to stem smuggling, success in closing the gap between the inter-bank and open market exchange rates and government's courage on energy and fuel pricing to sustain the IMF Stand-By Agreement (SBA).

However, it urged the finance minister to ensure that the next IMF program is more reform-oriented and addresses the fundamental flaws in the energy sector and the tax system.

The council welcomed the steps taken by the minister to strengthen governance and accountability in state owned enterprises.

The meeting was also attended by Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana, chairman FBR and his team with whom the PBC shared its concerns at the disproportionate burden of taxes on the formal sector, disparity in tax rates between corporate and unincorporated businesses, levy of minimum tax on turnover during tax holiday period and on listed companies, high tax on salaried employees and U-turns on taxation of inter-corporate dividends.

The finance minister assured that a focused discussion on these issues will be organized with the FBR.

Minister Akhtar also shared plans to establish a Tax Policy Unit, independent of the FBR and to seek input from the Fiscal Affairs Department of the IMF on issues highlighted by the PBC.

PBC urged the minister in her position as the chair of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Revival to support competitive pricing of power for industry to create more jobs, promote exports, reduce reliance on imports, increase tax revenue and absorb surplus generation capacity, especially in the winter months.

"To accomplish this, it advised expediting the south to north transmission projects to dispatch low-cost power, restructure IPP debt in tenor and in the case of CPEC projects, also to convert to G-to-G terms, reduce T&D and recovery losses of DISCOs and to convert the three imported coal projects to cheaper local Thar coal," the statement said.

The finance minister assured that the government's objective was to reduce tariffs.

On exports, the PBC recommended a "whole-of-government" approach to overcome fragmentation between ministries.

"It urged operationalising the EXIM Bank, changes to allow adequate investment in brand building and in acquisition of IT companies abroad, finding ways to wash export pricing clean of all taxes incurred in an extended supply chain, reconfigure export incentives to target items with growing global demand and ensure that PSQCA and DRAP were fully functional for their certification roles."

The finance minister agreed that the best ambassadors of a country are existing investors and foreign investors derive confidence from local investors.

PBC urged focus of FDI on projects that lead to exports or reduction in imports, that enhance food security and which bring new technology and know-how.

The PBC reiterated the importance of IMF support and the finance minister assured that the government was fully committed to delivering the conditionalities of the SBA. She welcomed PBC's suggestions on a reform centric program for the future.

PBC apprises ministers about key challenges

September 20, 2023

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Business Council (PBC) on Tuesday held meetings with caretaker Federal Ministers Dr Gohar Ejaz and Muhammad Ali on Tuesday and discussed strategies and initiatives to enhance international trade, promote exports, and improve the ease of doing business including industrial tariff and green energy options.

During the session, with caretaker Minister for Commerce and Industry, the PBC presented a series of recommendations aimed at addressing key challenges and opportunities in Pakistan's economic landscape.

The PBC emphasized the importance of rationalizing key inputs such as electricity, gas, and labour to enhance the overall competitiveness of Pakistani industries. The PBC also stressed the importance of promoting IT sector and transition from commodities to value addition and branding.

Commerce minister expressed his unwavering commitment to fostering economic growth and facilitating trade. He assured that regional trade would be facilitated through proper channels to bolster regional economic ties. He called on the members of PBC to come forward and play their due role in formalizing the economic activities.

Dr Gohar Ejaz reaffirmed the government's commitment to combating smuggling activities, ensuring a level playing field for legitimate businesses. He said, "I will visit every industrial city and make every industry functional" thereby demonstrating his dedication to public service and to enhancing Pakistan's industrial landscape.

The Commerce minister also outlined his commitment to opening up new markets, increasing IT exports, and promoting E-Commerce to boost Pakistan's GDP. He also mentioned plans for organizing trade exhibitions and securing concessions from trade partners. Dr Gohar Ejaz highlighted the government's intention under SIFC to make IT exports a significant contributor to the country's GDP.

This meeting marked a significant step forward in Pakistan's efforts to strengthen its international trade ties, enhance exports, and improve the ease of doing business. The Ministry of Commerce is committed to working closely with the business community and stakeholders to implement these recommendations and achieve sustainable economic growth.

According to an official statement, interim Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali held a comprehensive meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Business Council at Power Division during which issues related to the industrial tariff and green energy options came under discussion.

The minister acknowledged the fact that industry is the backbone of the country and to enhance its potential issues need to be addressed on war footing. The minister issued directions to the concerned quarters to take business community on board and give priority to their issues.



Energy minister directs to redress grievances of Pakistan Business Council

September 19, 2023

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali held a comprehensive meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Business Council here Tuesday and issues related to the industrial tariff and green energy options came under discussion.

The minister acknowledged the fact that the industry is the backbone of the country and to enhance its potential, the issues need to be addressed on a war footing, said a press release.

The minister issued directions to the concerned quarters to take the business community on board and give priority to their issues.



Pakistan Business Council Slams Interim Govt for its 'Do Nothing' Approach

September 4, 2023

The caretaker government's "do nothing" approach will accelerate "informalization of the economy", said the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) on Monday.

In a tweet, one of the country's largest corporate advocacy platforms was of the view that of the long list of fundamental reforms required by Pakistan's economy, some such as privatization/restructuring of SOEs & DISCOS, may be beyond the Caretaker Government's remit.

"However, blatant smuggling, under-invoicing, theft of electricity, misuse of the Afghan Transit Treaty, tax evasion by retail, wholesale and the undocumented real estate sectors are all against the law," the council remarked.

PBC also said, "It is well within the powers of any government (certainly the Caretaker, which has no vote bank to protect) to enforce the writ of the state. A "do nothing" approach does nothing to create a positive sentiment or hope. It only accelerates informalization of the economy. Time to show some teeth!"

This comes just a few days after the Council labeled the current plunge of the Pakistan Rupee "a perfect storm" for the economy.

The PBC questioned the science behind the central bank's market reviews when it comes to the management of the exchange rate. "What then is the role of our monetary policy premised on high interest rates in managing the value of the Rupee? With over Rs. 9 trn cash in circulation, there is enough available to speculate in currency and gold. This Rs. 9 trn is unbanked money, to its holders, neither bank deposit accounts, nor money market investment, however high the returns may be, are irrelevant whilst the rising value of the \$ is an attractive proposition," it remarked.

The Council explained that overseas Pakistanis sending money through hawala fetches Rs. 15+ more on the dollar versus remitting through banking channels. So long as smuggling is rife and attractive, the differential in interbank and hawala rates will subsist and remittances will divert to the latter.



Pakistan Business Council concerned over pace of agreement with UAE

September 29, 2023

The Pakistan Business Council has expressed its concerns over the pace at which the government was moving to finalise a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Cepa) with the United Arab Emirates.

“The PBC believes that the agreement would be counterproductive for Pakistani industry unless the concerns are not fully addressed,” said the council in the statement. The PBC listed seven points as concerns.

The council said that there was a “basic flaw” in the trade data used by the commerce ministry to identify tariff lines, which would be part of Pakistan’s concession list to the UAE. “It ignores domestic industry which is manufacturing for the local market and paying taxes and employing Pakistanis.”

The trade data does not reflect domestic manufacturing capacity or the potential to scale it up to minimise import reliance, it added.

The proposed CEPA would bring 80% of the tariff lines to zero in 10 years-time, and though this would be done in four phases, “it ignores the differences” in both the quality and cost of inputs including power available to UAE manufacturers as opposed to Pakistani firms.

“Not only do UAE manufacturers have access to globally competitive infrastructure, they are also able to source raw materials from global suppliers at a fraction of the cost at which the same imported raw materials are available locally to Pakistani manufacturers,” it said and warned that without careful evaluation of such factors, Cepa would amount to offshoring manufacturing.

It added that the UAE government has been actively pursuing industrialisation as a national policy, with an aim to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The manufacturing industry is thus a priority for the UAE government and hence benefits from a number of “hidden subsidies”.

The council lamented that unfortunately, the opposite was true in Pakistan where manufacturing carries a disproportionate burden of taxes, and suffers from poor infrastructure and excessive bureaucratic control.

“UAEs’ Non-Tariff Barriers do not appear to be getting the attention that they deserve,” it said and called for ensuring that Pakistani standards and test results of Pakistani laboratories were accepted by the UAE authorities, otherwise local exporters would be at a disadvantage even if they have tariff preference.

It went on to add that any new agreement must provide for electronic data interchange to ensure that export and import values match each other to check under-invoicing.

The council further stressed the need for a high level of transparency on import values, as well as local value addition. Clarity was required on sourcing of such inputs from countries from which “Pakistan does not allow” direct imports.

“Services need to be a part of the CEPA. Free movement of labour and the ability of Pakistani professionals to practice in the UAE without the need for additional examinations should be ensured,” stated the PBC.



Interloop case study launched

August 29, 2023

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) jointly unveiled a significant initiative through a gong ceremony, introducing a case study on the remarkable trajectory of Interloop Limited. This case study, conducted by the PBC, aims to spotlight Interloop's impressive journey as a prominent textile composite company.

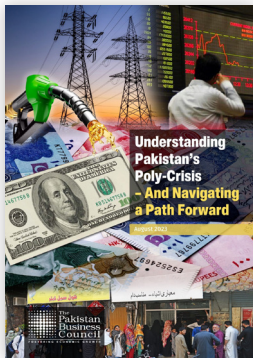
PSX Managing Director and CEO Farrukh H Khan said the Interloop Limited case study serves as a valuable resource to share insights into the company's successful evolution into a global business powerhouse. "As the largest private sector IPO in Pakistan's history and the leading textile composite company by market capitalisation on PSX, Interloop's growth story is truly inspiring," he said.

This endeavour not only highlights the company's achievements, but also underscores the importance of nurturing an organisational culture that fosters sustainable success, he added.

Pakistan Business Council CEO Ehsan Malik highlighted the significance of the case study in enhancing business practices across industries.

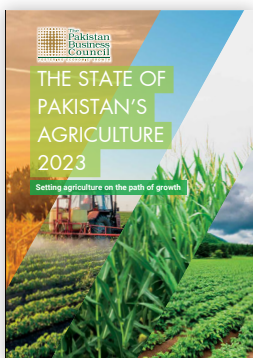
Publications During the Quarter

During the quarter, three (3) publications were released by the PBC. This brings the total number of publications in the current year to three (3)



Understanding Pakistan's Poly-crisis - and Navigating a Path Forward

<https://www.pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/Understanding-Pakistans-Polycrisis-%E2%80%93-And-Navigating-a-Path-Forward.pdf>



The State of Pakistan's Agriculture

<https://www.pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/The-State-of-Pakistans-Agriculture.pdf>



Positioning Pakistan for Integration with the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

<https://www.pbc.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/Positioning-Pakistan-for-integration-with-Regional-Comprehensive-Economic-Partnership-RCEP-1.pdf>

New PBC Members During the Quarter

Two new members joined in the Quarter. The new members who joined are:

- Excel Engineering (Pvt.) Limited



- Young's (Pvt.) Limited



The total strength of the PBC currently stands at 100 members and 5 Affiliates.

Twitter Highlights



30

Total Tweets

236,000

Impressions

989

New Followers

12,999

Total Followers

Centre of Excellence in Responsible Business

Key Activities July to September 2023



Vision

CERB is a multi-sector business coalition, assisting Pakistani enterprises to pursue economic, social and environmental value creation in the short, medium and long term.

Functions

CERB leverages best practices of global businesses, PBC Members and others in Pakistan to inculcate a change in mind-set among businesses including small and medium-sized enterprises. This will be supported through alliances with knowledge partners who have researched resources to contribute to its mission.



Awareness

The first outreach initiative of The Pakistan Business Council (PBC) to build capacity and capability of businesses in Pakistan.

Introduction

CERB is a multi-sector business coalition assisting Pakistani enterprises in pursuing sustainable value creation in the short and long term.

As Pakistan's premier business body composed of the largest and most successful businesses in the country, the PBC recognized the need to share and spread the best practices on responsible business conduct. As an outreach initiative to grow the formal sector, the PBC established in 2016 a Center of Excellence in Responsible Business (CERB).

By focusing our research on the good practices of businesses in Pakistan, we highlight how practitioner companies can enable conditions which stimulate the economy while providing livelihood opportunities in a manner which is inclusive and uses resources sustainably. CERB's provides insight and advisory on key elements of responsible business, and provides a platform for companies to network, build capacity and collaborate with peer companies.

CERB's Key Activities July to September 2023

Climate2Equal Webinar: Green Jobs for Women in Pakistan



As part of the Climate2Equal project, CERB conducted a webinar on green jobs on 25th July, 2023. The purpose of this webinar was to explore what green employment actually means and underscore the methods by which the private sector can pinpoint roles classified as 'green jobs' and implement strategies for 'greening jobs,' particularly concerning participation of women in their corporate operations. CERB was joined by Packages Group, Women in Energy Pakistan, and Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL). The webinar can be accessed [here](#).

SDPI Webinar: Strengthening Climate Action Through Public Private Partnerships



19TH SEP
2023

02:30 PM - 04:30 PM PKT



COP28 & Beyond: Strengthening Climate Action through Public Private Partnerships

Seminar on

Distinguished Speaker Guest



Nazish Shekha

Head of Initiative Centre of Excellence in Responsible Business
Pakistan Business Council (PBC)

SDPI PAKISTAN OFFICIALSDPI SDTVPAKISTAN

On September 19th, 2023, Nazish Shekha, the head of Initiative, CERB, spoke at a webinar hosted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), about the initiatives being taken by the private sector in addressing climate action.



Imparting Best Practices

Workshops and Webinars:
On good practices among PBC member and other companies, benchmarking them against global practices.

Evidence Based Research:

Landscape Analysis and Case Studies which guide policy and sustainable value creation

ESG: Creating Sustainable Workflow - Training Session at Aga Khan University



CERB conducted a training session titled 'ESG: Creating Sustainable Workflow,' at Aga Khan University. This was a collaborative effort between the University's internal audit team and the Office of Environment and Sustainability. The workshop brought together participants from various departments within AKU as well as representatives from AKDN agencies, including the Aga Khan Health Services, Aga Khan Education Services, and HBL - Habib Bank Limited. The workshop was followed by a tree plantation ceremony.

“Employer of Choice” Gender Diversity Awards



On the 8th of August 2023, PBC conducted the second “Employer of Choice” Gender Diversity Awards. The awards celebrate private sector employers in the country who are committed to implementing strong gender diversity policies and empowering women in the workplace, while also publicly disclosing this information in order to encourage other companies to do the same.

Jazz was announced as the winner this year. Second and third place were awarded to PepsiCo and Engro Fertilizers Ltd, respectively. Seven companies received honorable mention awards. They are Bank Alfalah, Bank of Punjab, Daraz, K-Electric, Nestle Pakistan, SCB Pakistan Limited and Syngenta Pakistan (in alphabetical order).

The event also included speaker sessions from Naz Khan, Principal Country Office-Pakistan, IFC, Fauzai Viqar, Federal Ombudsperson for the Protection Against Harassment of Women in the Workplace, and a panel discussion titled “Business Imperative for Transparency and Reporting on Inclusion” featuring CEOs of EBM and Daraz.



Importance of Disclosure: Training Session with UN Women



UN Women Pakistan, in collaboration with CERB and PBC, conducted an informative training on the importance of disclosure for transparency and accountability for corporations, featuring a presentation from Engro Fertilisers on their 'gender strategy'. The workshop was attended by representatives from Amreli Steels Limited, EBM, K-Electric, Pakistan Cables Limited, Daraz, JS Bank, Gul Ahmed Textile Mills Limited and Feroze1888 Mills Ltd.

Seeds of Change: A World Water Week Event by Coca-Cola



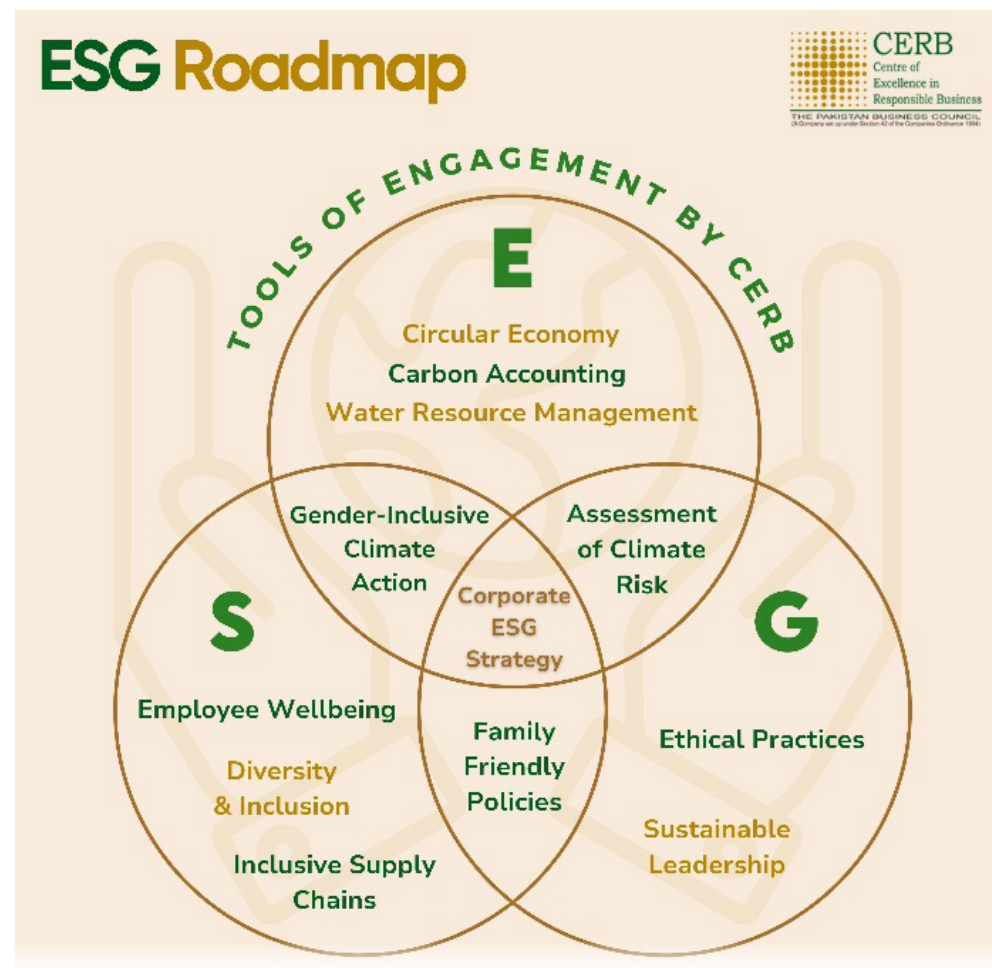
A successful partnership with the Coca-Cola Company (Pakistan and Afghanistan region) led to “Seeds of Change,” held at the Faletti’s Hotel in Lahore, on 21 August 2023. The event was part of the flagship SDG Leadership Programme under Goal 6: “Clean Water and Sanitation.” The event focused on measuring the water footprint, water risk assessments and Coca-Cola’s Ravi Basin Project.

Workshop on Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC) with SDG 9 leader Soorty Enterprises



Soorty Enterprises, in collaboration with CERB, conducted a one-day workshop on chemical management for zero discharge of hazardous chemicals. The aim of the workshop was to create awareness on how companies can measure their chemical usage and outputs. Experts from Soorty's Sustainability team, and international expert Saket Kulkarni, spoke about the importance of chemical management and global best practices on ZDHC. The workshop was attended by representatives from a wide variety of companies such as National Foods Limited, H Nizam & Sons, Feroze1888 Mills Ltd, Naveena Group and Engro Polymer.

ESG Roadmap Social Media Campaign



Apart from our event promotion efforts, CERB executed a comprehensive social media campaign across Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn, aimed at fostering corporate partnerships with organizations interested in crafting their own bespoke ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) strategies through our ESG Roadmap initiative.



Identifying Good Practices

K-Electric Webinar: Mindful Inclusion: Decoding Unconscious Bias



CERB was invited to speak at an internal webinar arranged by K-Electric on Mindful Inclusion. The webinar covered the importance of inclusivity and understanding unconscious bias. More than 200 people from KE joined the webinar.

Interloop Case Study Launch at PSX



CERB launched an insightful case study with Interloop titled, “Achieving Prosperity through a Winning Culture” at the Pakistan Stock Exchange. The case study aims to identify the traits of Interloop Limited’s organisational culture within its management practices. The event was an auspicious occasion marked by a gong ceremony at PSX to commemorate Interloop’s dedication to fostering a working culture that has resulted in international and local growth. The key segment of the event was a fireside chat with Navid Fazil, who in conversation with Ehsan Malik, CEO of The Pakistan Business Council, shared how Interloop started with just a small set-up making socks in Faisalabad and reached the status of a multinational. The event was followed by a webinar with a detailed conversation on organisational culture featuring speakers from the University of Oxford and Interloop’s team. The webinar can be accessed [here](#).



In Progress

In Progress

- On Oct 4, CERB is hosting a roundtable with UN Women to understand the needs of businesses regarding the tech skills required by women. HR/ Talent/ DEI leads are encouraged to attend and share their ideas to offer their guidance on the project.
- Next up in our Climate2Equal series is a workshop on creating compelling media campaigns that educate about the intersection of climate and gender. It will be held on Oct 12 at the PBC offices.
- Our pioneering Sustainability database is almost ready and will be launched in the last quarter of 2023.
- CERB in collaboration with GIZ and Zero Point Partners is conducting a baseline survey to assess the climate risks associated with business operations and how ready businesses are to address them. The project was launched with a webinar detailing the survey and how it will help to develop a guidebook that businesses can use as a resource for their climate readiness initiatives. The webinar can be accessed [here](#).

CERB on Social Media



LinkedIn

CERB's LinkedIn page saw immense growth in this quarter. The most traction was gained during August because of a campaign run for the Gender Diversity Awards and then a summary post for the Interloop case study launch which earned 205 reactions and a 35% engagement rate.

1,587
REACTIONS
↑146.4%

49
COMMENTS
↑81.5%

111
REPOSTS
↑192.1%



Instagram

Consistent posting on Instagram has resulted in an 80% follower count growth in this quarter. While Instagram is a platform different in tone and voice for CERB, it has helped in our outreach initiatives because we have tagged our partners who reshare our posts and stories creating further brand awareness for their audiences.

234

FOLLOWERS

+80% VS 29 JUN



Twitter

	Tweets	Tweet Impressions	Profile Visits	New Followers
JULY	13	8,093	920	13
AUGUST	52	37,000	-	38
SEPTEMBER	13	12,000	-	25

78

Total Tweets

57,093

Impressions

76

New Followers

731

Total Followers

1.2K

Top Tweet Impressions

About PBC

The PBC is a private sector business policy advocacy forum composed of Pakistan's largest businesses / groups including multinationals that have a significant investment in and a long-term commitment to the growth of Pakistan. Members turnover represents every ninth Rupee of Pakistan's GDP and together the members contribute 25% of tax revenues and 40% of exports. More information about the PBC, its members and its activities can be found on our website www.pbc.org.pk





The PBC Affiliates



The PBC Members and its Affiliates by Sector

PBC currently has 98 members 5 affiliates whose businesses cover nearly all sectors of the formal economy. The sector wise representation (in alphabetical order) is detailed below:

Sector	Member & A liate Companies
Large-Scale Manufacturing	
Agro Industries	2
Cement	2
Chemicals / Fertilizer	11
Energy	3
Engineering	14
Fast Moving Consumer Goods	19
Packaging Material	3
Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare	7
Sports Gear	1
Textiles	13
Total Members in Large-Scale Manufacturing	75
Services	
E-Commerce	1
Financial service	12
Hospitality	1
Insurance	2
Logistics / Courier	2
Real Estate Developers	1
Software	2
Telecommunication	2
Utilities	1
Total Members in the Services Sector	24
Conglomerates	5

32 MNC's from 14 Countries



USA



UK



UAE



Switzerland





Japan



Netherlands



France



Bahrain



South Korea



Hong Kong



Germany



China



Sweden



Turkey



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