

Punjab Tourism for Economic Growth Project

The World Bank Group is supporting the Government of Punjab's (GoPb) initiative on strengthening the tourism sector through the **Punjab Tourism for Economic Growth Project**. The GoPb recognizes the immense untapped economic potential of the tourism sector. It further acknowledges that to realize this potential it is critical to develop the sector to provide state-of-the-art tourist services across Punjab, focus on heritage and cultural tourism and other high-opportunity segments and mobilize private sector investment within the tourism sector to contribute to Punjab's economic growth.

Presently, international tourism contributes just under US\$ 1bn to GDP in Pakistan - 0.4% of GDP. It is expected that a clear policy direction and effective implementation will lead to almost five-fold increase in international tourism's contribution within the next few years. This ambitious target would be achieved not only through greater tourist traffic but also by targeting high-value market segments, attracting further private investment in the sector. There are numerous religious and heritage sites in Punjab reflecting the diverse and pluralistic tradition of the Indus Valley. From Muslim places of religious significance to Hindu temples and from Sikh Gurdwaras to Buddhist monasteries all share the same geography and are an integral part of Punjab's rich and diverse cultural and religious history. Given this diversity and richness of heritage, the economic potential, which could be generated from heritage and cultural tourism, is immense.

The project will focus on creating a robust institutional framework for tourism sector, enabling regulatory regime, investment in tourism and related infrastructure, setting quality standards and ensuring safety and security for tourists, provision of high quality skilled workforce and focusing on inclusive and sustainable tourism development. The specific objectives of the project are:

- a. To support the Government of Punjab in implementing a cultural, heritage and tourism policy supported by comprehensive institutional reforms for effective implementation framework.
- b. Leverage private sector's potential to create new economic opportunities for job creation, revenue generation, innovation, entrepreneurship and production efficiency.
- c. To promote an environment of pluralism and tolerance in the Province through a raised awareness of a varied culture and heritage.

The Project will have four components: (i) 'Policy, Institutions and Governance for Tourism Development' for better policy and sector coordination, public governance, and knowledge/outreach; (ii) 'Private Investment and Entrepreneurship Promotion' to encourage private participation and leadership in the development of the sector and the emergence of a better trained workforce; (iii) 'Public Investment Facility' to strengthen infrastructure services that can improve access and support facilities to and around the sites; and (iv) 'Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation' for daily implementation activities.