



Information Technology – Punjab's Future

Information technology has assumed the central role in the development of knowledge economies and transformation of the world into a global village. The IT sector is growing rapidly in Pakistan along with the country positioned as the preferred source of freelance software developers, programmers, business process outsourcing and application designers¹, owing to large English speaking population and a number of excellent IT training institutions.



Broad IT Base

Pakistan has more than 2,000 IT companies and call centers, with 300,000+ English-speaking IT professionals with expertise in current and emerging IT products and technologies, providing an enormous human and knowledge capital potential. Moreover, in the last three years, IT exports have grown manifold amounting to \$2.4 Billion in software and IT enabled services outsourcing. The major share of IT exports is made to US, accounting for 58% of the total exports followed by UK (9%), Canada (4%), UAE (3%), China (2%) and Others (10%).



Pakistan Software Houses Association (PASHA), Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) have acted as catalysts for this change. P@SHA works as a functional trade association for the IT industry in Pakistan and has gained international recognition by having won several awards in the Asia Pacific ICT awards. Similarly, the PITB has significantly contributed towards raising awareness among the public regarding the uses of IT through its various ventures in e-governance and public surveillance. Such projects have stimulated local demand and boosted activity in IT companies. PITB has also laid a strong foundation for tech-entrepreneurship by establishing Plang, which has become the largest technology incubator in Pakistan and is distinguishable by its zero-equity model. This has been followed by the establishment of Plan X, which is an accelerator to empower mid-stage technology startups to the point where they are enabled to positively contribute to the economy in a sustainable manner. An amount of Rs.14 billion (approx.) has been earmarked for Governance & IT Sector in 2016-17 for implementation of projects sponsored by Punjab Information Technology Board and other government departments.



14 Software Technology Parks in Pakistan

Government of Pakistan (GOP) has been supporting IT sector through numerous initiatives that include various sustainable development and accelerated digitization projects, research and innovation, establishment of software technology parks, provision of subsidized bandwidth, international certifications, internships and trainings. As a result of this continuous support, Pakistan has been able to establish 14 Software Technology Parks spanning over an area of one million square feet with several world-class technology parks in the making. In order to further substantiate these efforts, a comprehensive plan has been laid out for positioning Pakistan on the global outsourcing map, whilst ensuring

participation in international forums, organizing domestic conferences, scaling the software technology parks and facilitating various certification (ISO 27001 and CMMI) programs. Moreover, the government is planning establishment of "Technology Incubators" and "Venture Funds" resulting in acceleration of entrepreneurship locally. Various incentives on part of the government have been put in place in order to strengthen the growth of the sector which include 100% equity ownership, 100% repatriation of capital/dividends, tax exemption on IT export revenues and subsidized state of the art Software Technology Parks.