



Shaping Punjab's Climate Agenda: Priorities, Evidence and Next Steps

Hosted By: Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR) & International Growth Centre (IGC)

Venue: Shalimar C, Pearl Continental Hotel, Lahore

Date: Wednesday, 30th September 2026

Time: 09:30AM-03:30PM

Introductory Remarks

09:30AM - 10:00AM

Opening Remarks: Ijaz Nabi, Executive Director CDPR, and Country Director, IGC

Chief Guest: Iftikhar Ali Sahoo, Additional Chief Secretary, Punjab

Keynote Speaker: Tayyab Zia, Additional Secretary, Environment Protection & Climate Change Department, Government of Punjab

Workshop Moderator - Dawar Hameed Butt, Public Policy Consultant & Air Quality Data Analyst

Session 1

Punjab's Climate Challenges and Priorities

10:00AM - 11:30AM

Key Discussant - Maryam Khan, Environment Protection & Climate Change Department - EP&CCD

Session 2

Punjab's Adaptation Choices, Global Lessons and Best Practices

11:30AM - 01:00PM

Key Discussant - Fatima Khalid, Climate Change Advisor, British High Commission, Islamabad

Lunch

01:00PM - 2:00PM

Session 3

Mitigation: Abatement Pathways and Carbon Market Readiness

02:00PM - 3:30PM

Key Discussant: Ayesha Ali, Associate Professor of Economics, LUMS



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Context

Climate change is undermining Pakistan's growth and poses a critical challenge, threatening productivity, food and water security, livelihoods and essential infrastructure. Addressing these risks is therefore integral to the country's economic development and long-term resilience. These concerns are especially consequential in Punjab where climate exposure overlaps with much of Pakistan's economic base. Extreme heat, deteriorating air quality, flood risk along the Indus system and mounting pressure on groundwater and agricultural productivity bear directly on provincial output, public health and the fiscal position. The province is also central to any credible national mitigation effort, accounting for a substantial share of emissions through power, industry, agriculture and transport.

The policy architecture around these questions has moved quickly. Nationally, the Policy Guidelines for Trading in Carbon Markets establish an authorisation framework and a defined provincial role in the issuance of Letters of Intent and No Objection Certificates, alongside a revenue-sharing arrangement between the federal and provincial governments. Provincially, departments are now being asked to convert broad commitments into budgeted, sequenced and deliverable programmes.

The binding constraint is increasingly less the availability of climate finance than the capacity to prepare, appraise and absorb bankable projects and the evidence needed to prioritise between competing interventions under a fixed budget. This dialogue is intended to open a sustained conversation on precisely that gap.

Objectives

1. Provide a platform for the Government of the Punjab to set out its own climate priorities and the decisions it faces over the coming eighteen months.
2. Bring comparative international experience to bear on those priorities, with attention to cost, sequencing and institutional feasibility rather than aspiration alone.
3. Identify a shared agenda of questions on which further evidence would materially improve provincial decision-making.

4. Establish the basis for continuing technical engagement between government departments and the research community.

Sessions

Session 1: Punjab's Climate Challenges: Setting the Agenda

The provincial government sets the agenda for the day. Rather than a general overview, speakers are invited to focus on the three or four concrete decisions the province faces over the next twelve to eighteen months across both adaptation and mitigation: where the priorities lie, what solutions are already under consideration, and whether the constraints are institutional, financial or evidentiary. The two sessions that follow are structured to respond to what emerges here.

Guiding questions: Which climate risks pose the greatest threat to Punjab's growth, food and water security, and public finances? How well do Punjab's current development policies and investment plans account for these risks? What are the three or four most consequential adaptation and mitigation decisions the province must take over the next twelve to eighteen months? For these decisions, what is the binding constraint: evidence, finance, implementation capacity or institutional coordination? Where would better evidence change a decision rather than merely inform it?

Session 2: Punjab's Adaptation Choices: Global Lessons and Best Practices

An examination of how comparable jurisdictions have approached adaptation at scale, with emphasis on what worked, what it cost and how it was sequenced. The session draws on a small number of relevant comparators at similar levels of institutional and fiscal capacity rather than surveying global practice, and considers how adaptation finance has been mobilised and, critically, absorbed.

Guiding questions: What does a defensible adaptation prioritisation framework look like for a province like Punjab? Where is the constraint on adaptation finance a matter of availability, and where is it a matter of project preparation? What can be delivered within existing provincial budgets, and what genuinely requires external finance? What should the provincial government provide directly, and what should it enable households and firms to do themselves?

Session 3: Mitigation: Abatement Pathways and Carbon Market Readiness

An assessment of mitigation pathways that support Punjab's growth objectives, the economic trade-offs involved, and the role of carbon markets and other sources of finance in making additional investments viable. The session covers marginal abatement cost thinking applied to the provincial context, international experience with carbon markets in developing economies, and the practical state of readiness in Pakistan, including the province's institutional role under the national framework.



Guiding questions: How have other developing economies sequenced emissions reductions while expanding energy access, industrial production and employment? Which mitigation pathways offer Punjab the greatest emissions reductions relative to their full economic and social costs? Which sectors offer the largest abatement at the lowest cost in the provincial context? What capacity would the province need to build to discharge its role under the national carbon market framework? What is realistically achievable in the near term, and what requires a longer horizon?

Format

Each session pairs a short framing presentation with an opening response from a senior discussant and an extended open discussion, with roughly half of every session reserved for the floor. The intention is a working conversation rather than a series of set-piece addresses. A short synthesis will be circulated to participants afterwards, capturing the priority questions raised and the areas identified for further work.