



Eco-Tourism & Camping Villages Project

The once booming tourism industry of Pakistan had gone through a sharp decline because of the security situation, especially in areas that were once considered the tourist hubs of the country and thus resulted in increase of unemployment rate across the province, particularly in the case of youth, who constitutes over 30% of the population. The current government both at federal and provincial levels took keen interest in revitalizing the tourism industry in the country with the objective to provide local employment opportunities for the youth.

In the year 2017, The KP government allocated 257 million PKR for the promotion of tourism industry in the province with emphasis on eco-tourism and opening of new avenues not explored before. For this purpose, the Tourism Corporation of KP inked cost sharing agreement with UNDP in August 2017 for the implementation of the camping pods village project in

QUICK FACTS

Duration: 2017-2023

Implementing partner: Department of Culture, Sports, Tourism, Archaeology and Youth Affairs Department – Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Hashoo Foundation

Funding Partner(s): Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UNDP

Budget: \$ 2.168 million GoKP Share for Phase-I
\$ 484,335 UNDP share since 2017 till Dec 2020.
\$ 100,000 UNDP Share for Phase II (2021)
PKR 300 million GoKP share Phase II

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scenic valleys of the province. Since then, UNDP is supporting the Department of Tourism, Sports, Culture, Architecture & Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) in setting up 'camping villages' in scenic locations across the province. By fostering tourism, both KP's government and UNDP hope to revitalize the economy of the region by providing lucrative and sustainable employment and business opportunities to the local population, especially the youth.

The establishment of camping villages was a unique and novel idea to foster tourism in the province of KP. In addition to providing livelihoods to the local youth, this initiative provided tourists with an opportunity to partake in adventure tourism, understand eco-friendly tourism, and witness the beauty of the country. Till now, five camping pods villages have been established in different areas of the four districts. Each camping village is equipped with ten imported camping pods and washrooms of an international standard. Each camping pod is fully furnished with high quality furniture as well.

The project also introduced eco-friendly products made of 'green wood' – a blend of recycled materials such as plastic bags and scraps used to construct structures such as gazebos, staff accommodation quarters, kitchen, dining area, benches and picnic tables. The use of green wood to make these 'green structures' for the camping villages will ensure low carbon footing and contribute to the project's aim of promoting eco-friendliness. The Eco Tourism and Camping Villages project has opened new avenues for the promotion of eco-tourism and attract the private sector to establish similar camping villages in other parts of the province. 'Eco-tourism' is described as responsible travel to natural areas, preserving and respecting the local environment and heritage.

Results Achieved:

After the initiation of the project, following results have been achieved so far:

- Establishment of 05 Camping sites (01 Chitral, 01 Swat, 02 Buner and 01 Battagram) providing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with some great new tourist hubs.

- Enhanced income generation, and business development opportunities for youth
- 100 youth trained in business development and entrepreneurial skills and Eco Tourism to encourage them to set up their own tourism-related business.
- Existing small-scale businesses provided with trainings and orientation to make the best use of the economic opportunity provided by the camping villages and provide tourist-friendly services.
- Awareness sessions for local youth from each location on the indigenous, cultural, historical and environmental importance of the tourist sites.

Achievements:

After signing of the cost sharing agreement with Tourism Department of KP, UNDP has strengthened its relationship with tourism department by providing services not only in establishing the camping sites but also help the tourism departments both federal and provincial level for the change management strategies and revamping the whole approach for the promotion of the tourism industry in the country. Following are the main accomplishment:

- Under the phase-I of the project, all the five Camping sites have been completed after the construction of flood protection wall at Bahmorait, water supply Scheme at Malka Bunir and the construction of access road and water scheme at Shahidisar Bunir. These sites ie Gabeen Jabba in Swat, Malka and Shahidisar at Bunir and Bhamborait in Chitral district are now handed over to Culture and Tourism Authority of KP government.
- Trainings on Entrepreneurship & Business Development, Hospitality Management and Adventure Tourism for the youth have been completed in Swat, Buner, Battagram and Chitral and 100 youths have been trained.
- Technical support provided to KP government for: i) preparation of strategic plan for the promotion and development of ecotourism industry in the KP province and ii) for administrative support to TCKP and facilitating strategic plan preparation.

Gabeen Jabba was the first site completed in year 2019 and operationalized during the year 2019. Right after opening of the site, it gained massive popularity among the local and international tourists. During the current year, Prime Minister of Pakistan along with cabinet members and Chief Minister of the KP province paid visit to the site and appreciated the pods and all available facilities.



US Dollars with UNDP for the implementation of the second phase of the camping pods project. The project has now been started and initial survey of feasible sites identification is progressing.



Lesson learnt:

During the implementation of the project, the concept of Camping Pods was very well received by the public at large. A lot of interest was generated in the social media as well as mainstream media and the tourists thronged the camping villages established by TCKP. The idea of introducing European styled wooden camping pods was an instant hit and was instrumental in success of the project. The said pods were procured through international procurement process of UNDP.

A single major hurdle in the establishment of camping villages/areas was the uncertainty in the availability of land. Several visits were undertaken for selection for appropriate place for establishing camping villages as per guidelines of TCKP. These visits were undertaken by a team of subject matter professionals of TCKP, UNDP with support from local district administration.

Once the site was selected with preliminary consent for the availability of land by local administration; master planning and other design works were undertaken. However, at multiple times, the sites had to relocate as the land could not be handed over for execution. Resultantly, new sites had to be selected, master planning to be reworked. This led to loss in crucial time and unnecessary delays in completion of the project.

Phase II of the Project:

After receiving an overwhelming response from the public, the provincial government under the Culture and Tourism Authority of the province, has decided to invest more in establishing 5 additional sites in the scenic valleys of the KP province. Having trust on UNDP, the provincial government has very recently signed financing agreement of 1.9 million

Planned Activities for Year 2021

- **Selection of five new sites:** Technical feasibilities of 7 sites have been done by UNDP. The reports are submitted with CTA-GoKP for final approval and lease agreement with the landowners.
- **Topographic survey of the new sites:** The firm has been hired and right after the sites' lease agreements, the firm will conclude the topographic survey.
- **ITB for the procurement of pods:** The evaluation process of the ITB has been completed and the government has been asked for the allocation of additional resources or to decrease the number of pods per site so that to award the contract. The available budget is substantially less than the quoted price of the firm for procurement and installation of pods along with washrooms.
- **Civil work contract:** This process is no being delayed and will be carried out next year as the site selection could not complete yet.

Partnerships

- Department of Tourism, Sports, Culture, Architecture & Youth Affairs, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – Provided financial support in the execution of the phase-I and phase-II of the Eco Tourism project.
- Hashoo Foundation – Engaged for the community trainings around eco tourism and hospitality management.

- Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) – supported in change management strategy of the PTDC

Project Areas Phase 1

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Districts Chitral, Swat, Buner and Battagram

Project Areas Phase 2

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Districts Chitral, Swat, Dir upper and Dir Lower