

Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Press Release

Landmark Ehsaas Strategy document unveiled for feedback

September 16, 2019 – Islamabad: The Ehsaas strategy has been released to the public for feedback today at pass.gov.pk. The strategy elaborates on the Prime Minister’s vision of a welfare state. This is a landmark document because of the quality, clarity and comprehensiveness of the Strategy presented. It is the first time in the history of the country that a strategy document of the government has been shared with government departments and the public at the same time.

“By putting the strategy out for public consultation, we are introducing a new culture of openness and transparency that will enable the government to work in collaboration with the best and brightest brains in the country”, Sania Nishtar tweeted @SaniaNishtar while releasing the strategy, seeking inputs on feedback@pass.gov.pk. The Strategy document is on the website of the Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division.

According to the new strategy document, it “outlines the Government’s vision, which is the bedrock on which Ehsaas has been built; the Principles, which drive Ehsaas; the context in which it has been shaped; the Theory of Change, which underpins its conceptualization; and the four pillars under which its goals, pillars, objectives, policies, programs and initiatives are organized. The Strategy document also outlines details about the manner in which 21st century tools and approaches are envisaged to build a welfare state.”

The Ehsaas strategy outlines the four key pillars: Addressing elite capture and strengthening governance; Safety nets; Livelihoods and jobs for the poor; and Human Capital formation.

“The Government is fully cognizant that massive poverty reduction and quantum changes in the lives of the poor is the result of overall robust and sustained economic growth and the ability of governments to accrue the benefits of that growth equitably to populations. The Government is driving change at various levels to achieve these objectives through a wide variety of economy-wide interventions. One set of interventions in the overall framework of the Ehsaas program (*Pillar I: Address elite capture and make the government system work for equality*) contributes to that overarching mission” states the document.”

It further goes on to clarify: “Although Ehsaas is the vehicle through which the Government envisages implementing its vision for a welfare state, and as such, it is a long-term umbrella initiative, there is a short-term requirement to prioritise its *Safety Net Pillar* in view of any economic hardship that may arise as a result of the fiscal austerity measures of the current structural adjustment programme. The Safety Net pillar is dovetailed with the National Poverty Graduation Initiative under *Jobs and livelihoods, Pillar IV*, which is envisaged to pave the way for livelihood creation.

The main instruments through which safety nets are being prioritized are the following:

1) Increase in social protection spending by the government; 2) Enhanced scope and coverage of safety nets; 3) Strong focus on governance of institutions implementing safety net programmes; 4) Development of the new national socio-economic database to enable precise targeting; 5) Systems building for efficiency and integrity; and 6) One-Window Ehsaas.

The One-Window Ehsaas concept, is a key part of the strategy to tackle multi-dimensional poverty. The strategy document highlights illustrations to outline its modalities.

Ehsaas *Pillar III* is predicated on the understanding that *Human Capital* development is a significant contributor to the wealth of a nation in this digital age. Therefore, to catalyze action in the right direction, Pillar III includes a number of specific policies and programmes with regard to health, education and nutrition to complement sectoral strategies. These are meant to supplement sectoral policy initiatives of federal and provincial governments with an additional emphasis for the marginalized.

Ehsaas' existing targets are based on the available resource envelope. These will be expanded to attract new funding and partnerships. Provincial Ehsaas plans that are under development will be incorporated in the overall Ehsaas goals. A new policy and framework of commitments will allow the private sector and the civil society to make commitments linked to the pillars and goals.

Ehsaas is one of the main instruments through which the Government aims to build a welfare state, based on the principles of Riasat-e-Madina. Ehsaas is a whole-of-government multi-sectoral coordinated initiative—the biggest and boldest pro-poor programme ever launched in the country.

The Ehsaas framework is aimed at the extreme poor, orphans, widows, the homeless, the disabled, the jobless, poor farmers, labourers, the sick who risk medical impoverishment, the undernourished; students from low-income backgrounds and poor women and elderly citizens. This plan is also about lifting lagging areas where poverty is higher.