

Government of Pakistan
Benazir Income Support Programme

PRESS RELEASE

32ND BOARD MEETING OF BISP HELD IN ISLAMABAD

The 32nd board meeting of BISP was held over two days recently (April 19 and April 29) due to the extensive agenda that needed to be covered by the board. On both days, Chairperson of BISP, Dr. Sania Nishtar chaired. The meeting was attended by other Board members namely, Mr. Ali Raza Bhutta, Secretary BISP, Mr. Qazi Azmat Isa, Ms Khawar Mumtaz, Mr. Atif Bajwa, Mr. Zafar A Khan and representatives from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs Division and the Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination. This was the third board meeting in a period of six months since the new chair of the board has been appointed.

During the meeting, Chairperson assured her commitment for transparency, accountability and merit for bringing improvements in the Programme. She said that BISP Board and Management have taken proactive action for devising systems to transform the BISP into a rule and merit based efficient organization.

During the Board meeting, board sub-committees presented agendas related to their respective mandates. “We have empowered board sub-committees and have facilitated their convening so that agendas are well prepared and are brought to the board after thorough discussion in board sub-committees”, Sania Nishtar explained.

The Board discussed at length the Request for Proposal (RFP) document to bring partnering financial institutions on board. The document will be finalized in light of the decisions of the board. The Board discussed the open competitive process which will be used to engage the financial institutions. The cash transfer system will be revamped with this new engagement. “The RFP document and the criteria on which bidders will be selected has been deliberated upon and agreed by the full board” said Sania Nishtar.

The Chairperson also briefed the Board on the Ehsaas programme of the Prime Minister and the roles assigned to BISP in the programme. She informed the Board about the modalities of the Kifalat programme of unconditional cash transfers to women and the paradigm change being introduced through the financial inclusion agenda and the significant operational improvements that are being made. In addition to this, its education conditional cash transfer programme would be expanded under Ehsaas and a new health and nutrition programme would be designed. Ehsaas would also include a shock-oriented demand based precision safety net to protect the most marginalized families from catastrophic health related expenditures. This programme would be named Tahafuz.

Consistent with the organizational drive to improve accountability and transparency the Board approved Whistle Blowing Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Internal Audit Charter. Also included in the agenda was the policy to acquire human resources through a competitive process. The Board approved the policy and agreed with the recommendation of management which were framed on the request of Chairperson BISP that deputations in BISP would be finalized through a rule-based competitive process.

Through approval of Whistle Blowing Policy, BISP now provides a platform to BISP employees and other interested parties for identifying any irregularity, embezzlement/ malpractice, fraud, wrongdoing in a confidential manner without any fear of adverse consequences.

The approval of Conflict of Interest Policy reflects Board and management's attempt to ensure that decisions in BISP are taken entirely in public interest. Senior management and Board members would be required to declare any personal interest and would have to distance themselves from any decision where they have any such interest. "At every board meeting, Board members now have to declare any possible conflict of interest, and full compliance with this requirement", explained chairperson BISP.

The Board also gave approval to the procurement manual to further streamline the processes of procurement in the organization. The manual has introduced checks and balances in the process of procurement.

The framework for a pilot scheme to assist BISP beneficiaries through business incubation was also approved by the Board. The Board also gave a go ahead to establish digital hubs in eight tehsil offices of BISP on a pilot basis as a part of Ehsaas programme.

BISP Board resolved to contribute to the objectives of Ehsaas through efficient, effective, impartial and apolitical reorganization of BISP along modern management principles and using the best available technological and human resources.