

Govt. of Pakistan's Initiatives/Projects for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship

Dr. Usama Ijaz Bajwa

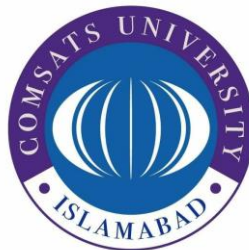
Tenured Associate Professor,

Department of Computer Science,

COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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جو عالمِ ایجاد میں ہے صاحبِ ایجاد
ہر دور میں کرتا ہے طواف اس کا زمانہ

تقلید سے ناکارہ نہ کر اپنی خودی کو
کر اس کی حفاظت کہ یہ گوہر ہے یگانہ
لیکن مجھے ڈر ہے کہ یہ آوازہ تجدید
مشرق میں ہے تقلیدِ فرنگی کا بہانہ

Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

Growing Start-up Ecosystem

Pakistan has witnessed a **significant increase in the number of start-ups** in recent years. Several cities, such as Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, have emerged as key hubs for entrepreneurial activities, fostering innovation and collaboration.

Supportive Government Initiatives

The **Government of Pakistan has launched various initiatives** including financial support programs, skill development schemes, policy reforms, and the establishment of incubators and accelerators to promote entrepreneurship and support start-ups.

Technology and Digital Transformation

Tech-based start-ups, especially in the **fintech, e-commerce, and edtech sectors**, have gained traction due to a growing young population and increased internet penetration.

Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

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Ecosystem

The Pakistani startup ecosystem has had an incredible year. Having moved up the ladder to 75th position worldwide and 2nd in the South Asian region, as revealed by the recent "Global Startups Ecosystem Index 2021". The highest-ranked city in Pakistan in terms of startup activity is Lahore, having risen 14 places to 257th globally and 4th in South Asia.

Pakistan is the 5th most populous country with a population of 200 million English speaking educated youth. This helps facilitate startup interaction globally.

According to the 2021 Emerging Venture Markets Report, Pakistan has experienced a 97 percent increase in venture capital funding in 2020, contributing to Pakistan's growth as a startup ecosystem hub.

According to the Pakistan Startup Ecosystem Report 2019, business start-up activity increased significantly between 2012 and 2019. In 2012, there were only two major incubators and no notable funding sources or investors. However, 2019 saw an increase of 24 major incubators/accelerators, 20 formal investors/ funding sources and 80 co-working spaces in Pakistan. Over the past few years, business incubators, accelerators and co-working spaces have emerged across Pakistan, some supported by the Federal Government's National R&D Fund. Even with the impact of Covid, Pakistan expects \$360 billion in consumer spending by 2027

Pakistan now hosts a total of 800 or more startups. It is estimated that Pakistani startups raised investment via 141 deals from 2015 to 2020, 19 deals remain undisclosed therefore \$178 million is attributed to 122 deals. This growth has been supported by both infrastructural and policy measures.

In last 5 years, Pakistan did a remarkable growth in internet adoption due to huge gains in affordability - 1.5 GB cost less than a dollar has led to 103 million internet subscribers, which has created a large accessible target market for startups.

Pakistan has tech talent in abundance to create successful venture back startups - 400K software engineers and 20K CS and IT graduates coming out of university every year.

The Government of Pakistan has decided to set up a 75 million dollar fund for entrepreneurs and small startups at State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The launch of new local funds focused on Pakistan in the past two years, are all strong indicators where the venture capital landscape is moving. As activity in the entrepreneurial ecosystem has grown and proliferated, international donor agencies and actors have also aligned their agenda in favor of entrepreneurship.

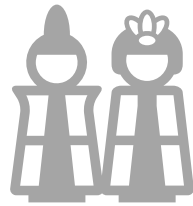
Corporations and large companies are also playing a role in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, either as partners, or separately, which support entrepreneurs via programs and small grants.

Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan



Youth Entrepreneurship

Pakistan has a large youth population, and there has been a surge in youth entrepreneurship. **Young entrepreneurs are actively pursuing innovative ideas and contributing to the country's economic growth**



Women Entrepreneurs

The number of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan has been on the rise. The government and various organizations have been working to **empower women by providing training, financial support, and mentorship.**



Social Entrepreneurship

There is a growing trend of social entrepreneurship in Pakistan, with start-ups focusing on **addressing social and environmental challenges.** These ventures aim to create a positive impact on society while maintaining profitability.

Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

Pakistan – young country with a growing middle class

Change in the number of households by income group¹ from 2015 to 2025, 000s

~220m

Population in Pakistan making it the 6th most populous nation

~23

the median age of the pop. making it one of the youngest in the world

~64%

of the population is below the age of 30



High Income²

~700

additional high income households



Middle Income²

~2,100

additional middle income households



Low Income²

while the number of lower middle income and low income households will reduce by ~10k

“We are now looking at Pakistan because it has all the intrinsic drivers to make it the next big South Asian market for startups: it has a large population, a burgeoning middle class, increasing internet penetration, and existing incumbents in key industries that are rife for disruption. Yes, the country has challenges but the infrastructure here is comparable to countries such as Bangladesh or Nigeria, which have already seen notable startup successes.”

Ozair Ali

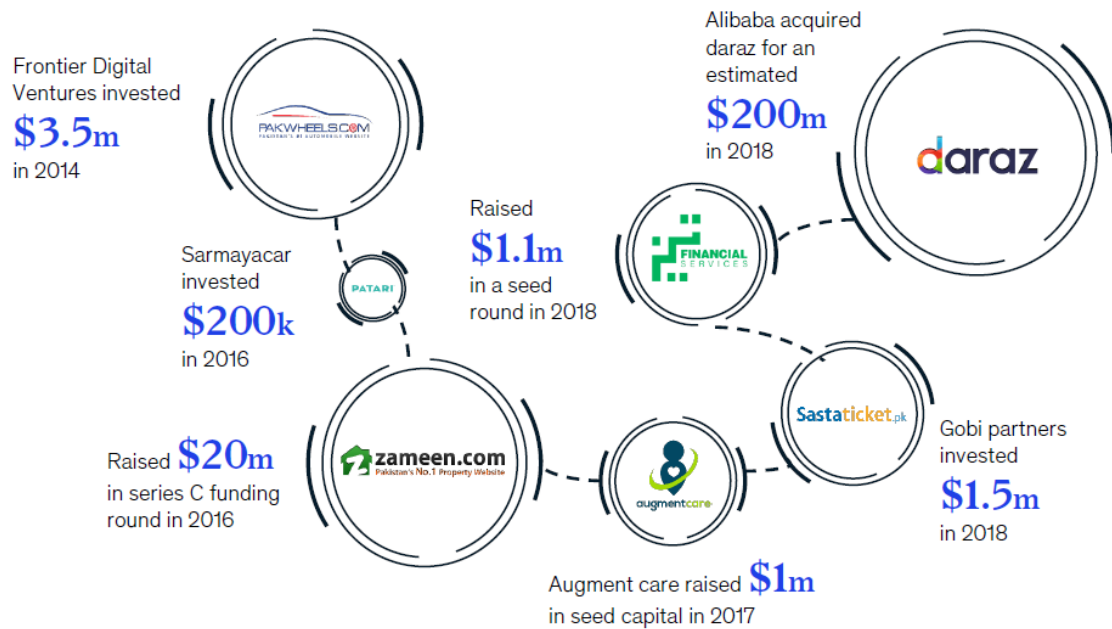
Co-founder/COO, Alter Global

¹ The data represents the 33 largest cities of Pakistan

² High income; >US\$70k per annum, Middle Income: US\$7.5-70k per annum, Low Income: <US\$7.5k per annum

SOURCE: City Scope Database 3.0; World Bank

Examples of startups from Pakistan that have raised funding recently



The Pakistan startup ecosystem is slowly maturing

Government

- Government, at both the provincial and federal level, is carrying out initiatives to promote startup culture
- SECP recently approved the license for Pakistan's first PE & VC funds in 2017 (Ijara Capital and Lakson Investments)



Talent

- Universities and academia promote entrepreneurship, particularly by providing space for students to test and incubate potential businesses and learn entrepreneurial skills



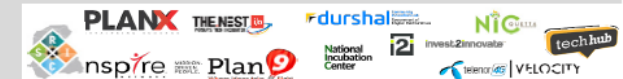
Funding

- Corporations, foundations and government provide funding for early stage startups to accelerate their growth
- Planet N has invested in 14 startups across e-commerce, fintech, edu-tech and renewable sectors



Incubators

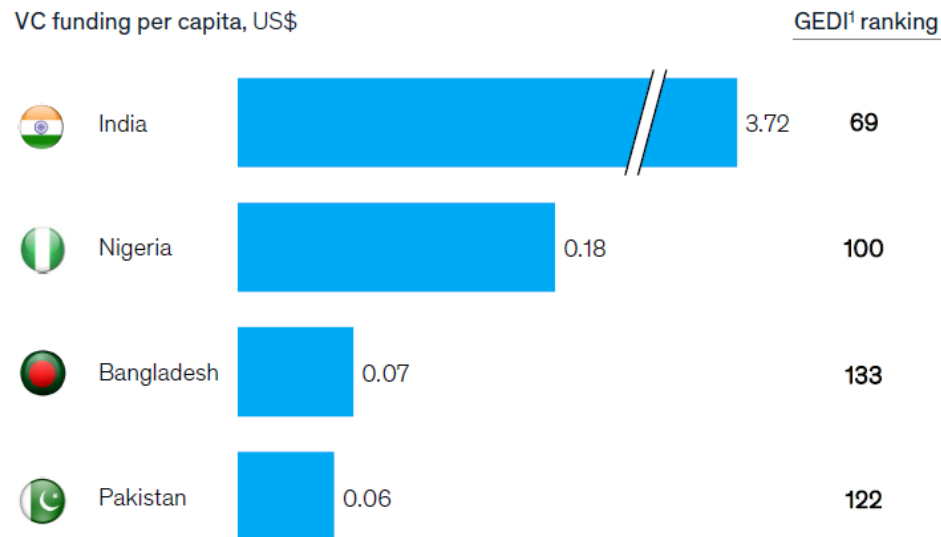
- Incubators provide management services and secondary support services to help new startups setup on ground
- Government has funded incubation centers in all 4 provinces



Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

VC funding per capita in Pakistan vs. peers

Pakistan received ~6 cents per capita of VC funding between 2016-18



¹ Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute
SOURCE: Pitchbook, World Bank

3x

more VC investment per capita in Nigeria vs. Pakistan per year between 2016-18

UAE has a significantly larger VC per capita of ~US\$ 40

“I have been involved with startups in Pakistan for the last 15 years in some capacity. The ecosystem in Pakistan is beginning to look exciting. We’ve been participating in the Asia ICT awards since 2003 and for the past 5-6 years Pakistani startups started featuring in the top three. We are also seeing regional investors from the Middle East and Southeast Asia taking a real interest in Pakistani startups now. Three of our startups have raised investment from the Oman Technology Fund just recently. I think the industry needs those first few breakthroughs; the shining stars who become global products, for us to really take off.”

Jehan Ara

President of P@SHA and The Nest/O

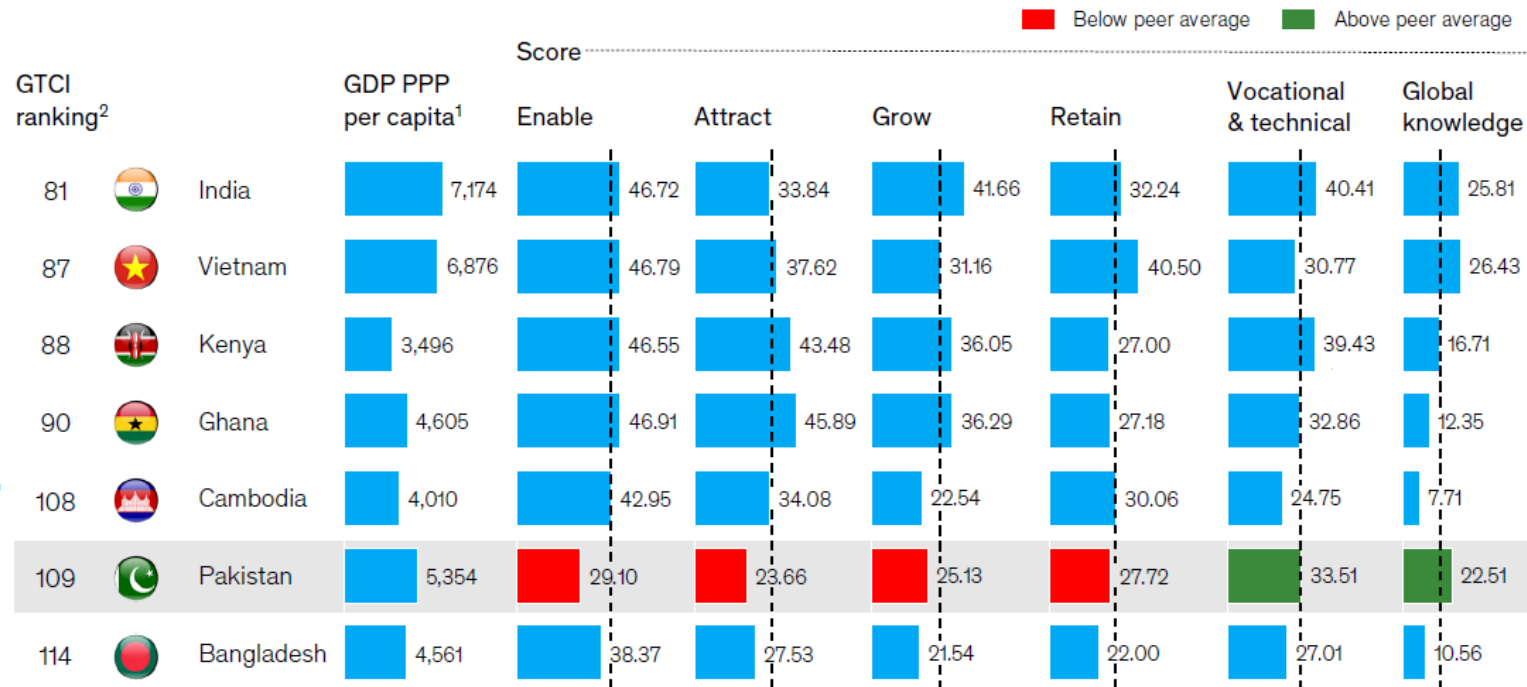
Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

“Having grown up in Karachi, I believe in the value Pakistan offers. I set up the operations for my startup in Pakistan in 2016 because it allows me to operate at a fraction of the costs compared to the UK and access qualified talent. There are various socio-cultural challenges e.g. parents often encourage their children to choose a role in a multinational company over a startup and it does take much longer to find the right people as basic structures like job portals are not as useful. However, once you do find the right team you can do wonders.”

Sana Shah
Startup founder from Pakistan

Pakistan ranks 109 out of 120 countries in the talent competitiveness index

Pakistan lags peers in talent competitiveness



¹ Reported by IMF (\$, 2017)

² INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index (2018)

SOURCE: INSEAD GTCI 2018

GTCI 2022 Rankings

Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2022 rankings

COUNTRY	SCORE	OVERALL RANK	INCOME GROUP	REGIONAL GROUP	REGIONAL GROUP RANK
Tunisia	34.64	91	Lower-middle income	Northern Africa and Western Asia	16
Sri Lanka	33.53	92	Lower-middle income	Central and Southern Asia	3
Bolivia, Plurinational St.	33.40	93	Lower-middle income	Latin America and the Caribbean	15
Gambia	32.46	94	Low income	Sub-Saharan Africa	6
Ghana	32.24	95	Lower-middle income	Sub-Saharan Africa	7
Morocco	29.96	96	Lower-middle income	Northern Africa and Western Asia	17
Kenya	29.80	97	Lower-middle income	Sub-Saharan Africa	8
El Salvador	29.58	98	Lower-middle income	Latin America and the Caribbean	16
Lao PDR	28.95	99	Lower-middle income	Eastern, Southeastern Asia and Oceania	14
Eswatini	28.94	100	Lower-middle income	Sub-Saharan Africa	9
India	28.90	101	Lower-middle income	Central and Southern Asia	4
Zambia	28.60	102	Low income	Sub-Saharan Africa	10
Cambodia	28.43	103	Lower-middle income	Eastern, Southeastern Asia and Oceania	15
Algeria	28.21	104	Lower-middle income	Northern Africa and Western Asia	18
Benin	27.81	105	Lower-middle income	Sub-Saharan Africa	11
Rwanda	27.67	106	Low income	Sub-Saharan Africa	12
Senegal	27.32	107	Lower-middle income	Sub-Saharan Africa	13
Guatemala	26.97	108	Upper-middle income	Latin America and the Caribbean	17
Nigeria	26.73	109	Lower-middle income	Sub-Saharan Africa	14
Honduras	26.59	110	Lower-middle income	Latin America and the Caribbean	18
Nepal	26.50	111	Lower-middle income	Central and Southern Asia	5
Iran, Islamic Rep.	26.48	112	Lower-middle income	Central and Southern Asia	6
Pakistan	26.30	113	Lower-middle income	Central and Southern Asia	7
Nicaragua	26.28	114	Lower-middle income	Latin America and the Caribbean	19

Ten best performers by regional group

GTCI	ENABLE	ATTRACT	GROW	RETAIN	VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SKILLS	GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE
Central and Southern Asia (8 countries)						
Kazakhstan (62)	Sri Lanka (85)	Kyrgyzstan (58)	Kazakhstan (67)	Kazakhstan (54)	Sri Lanka (49)	Kazakhstan (30)
Kyrgyzstan (83)	India (89)	Kazakhstan (60)	India (72)	Kyrgyzstan (75)	Kyrgyzstan (67)	Iran (75)
Sri Lanka (92)	Kazakhstan (95)	Sri Lanka (121)	Pakistan (86)	Nepal (86)	Kazakhstan (85)	India (81)
India (101)	Kyrgyzstan (103)	Pakistan (126)	Kyrgyzstan (94)	Sri Lanka (89)	Iran (96)	Kyrgyzstan (89)
Nepal (111)	Iran (107)	Nepal (127)	Iran (98)	India (96)	Nepal (101)	Sri Lanka (97)
Iran (112)	Pakistan (111)	Bangladesh (128)	Sri Lanka (105)	Iran (104)	Pakistan (110)	Pakistan (108)
Pakistan (113)	Bangladesh (119)	India (130)	Bangladesh (119)	Pakistan (108)	Bangladesh (112)	Nepal (109)
Bangladesh (122)	Nepal (123)	Iran (133)	Nepal (120)	Bangladesh (111)	India (118)	Bangladesh (115)

Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

Access to Finance

While **access to finance remains a challenge** for many entrepreneurs, there have been efforts to improve this aspect. **Government-backed financing programs, venture capital funds, and angel investor networks** are gradually contributing to improved access to capital.

Collaboration and Networking

Entrepreneurial events, start-up competitions, and networking platforms have increased, providing opportunities for entrepreneurs to connect with investors, mentors, and other stakeholders.




Infrastructure and E-commerce Growth

The **improvement in infrastructure, including logistics and digital payment systems**, has facilitated e-commerce growth, leading to the emergence of several online businesses and marketplaces.

Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

Approach to developing talent

Models to develop entrepreneurship amongst youth

Potential options	Description
 Foster talent through university incubators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share knowledge and resources with startups that are successfully admitted to university incubator programs• Connect startups with mentors, e.g. academics• Build an entrepreneurial culture amongst students
 Facilitate talent through programming boot camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up boot camps to provide technical training• Partner with vocational training centers and global institutions such as Google, Microsoft, etc.
 Bring foreign talent home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide financial incentives to foreign talent (e.g., work with FBR to provide tax breaks)• Improve working environment of public and private institutions

Global examples

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers 12 week incubation programs• Provides access to mentors and technical resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides access to world class research facilities• Invests \$100k in exchange for 5% equity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers incubation programs• Successful start ups have attracted over ~\$40m
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides programming training• Leverages resources from Google, Hacks/Hackers, etc.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides programming and soft skills training free of cost• Facilitates underrepresented high schoolers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides financial incentives and easy settlement to foreign talent through their Thousand Talent plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides academic funding to attract foreign researchers through their Ramanujan Fellowship scheme, INSPIRE faculty scheme, etc.



Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

- Challenges
 - **Despite the positive developments**, the entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan **still faces challenges** such as bureaucracy, access to funding for early-stage start-ups, skill gaps, and the need for more supportive policies
- Global Recognition
 - Pakistani start-ups have **gained recognition on the global stage**, attracting international investments and partnerships, which further strengthens the country's entrepreneurial ecosystem

Pakistan winning 2 Golds in APICTA 2014

Pakistan is not short on talent

- Winners in startup and students projects
- While competing with 18 economies of Asia Pacific Region



Pakistan Winning 2 Golds in APICTA 2015

Pakistan is not short on talent



Pakistan is not short on talent



- Pakistan winning 3 Golds

APICTA 2016

Pakistan winning Gold

Pakistan is not short on talent

- Startup Category in APICTA 2017



Pakistan winning 1 Gold and 6 Silver Awards in APICTA 2018

Pakistan is not short on talent



APICTA AWARDS

BY GRABBING **MAXIMUM WINNERS**
& **MERITS** OVERALL

APICTA AWARDS 2022

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

RANK	ECONOMIES	MERIT	WINNER	TOTAL
1	PAKISTAN	13	7	20
2	HONG KONG	10	6	16
3	THAILAND	4	6	10
4	CHINESE TAIPEI	8	-	8
5	SRILANKA	6	1	7
6	MALAYSIA	5	-	5
7	BRUNEI	2	2	4





Elastica

Elastica offers data science powered SaaS app and cloud service security for companies of all sizes.

[San Jose, California, United States](#)

Categories	Cloud Security , Machine Learning , Network Security , SaaS
Headquarters Regions	San Francisco Bay Area , Silicon Valley , West Coast
Founded Date	2012
Founders	Rehan Jalil
Operating Status	Active
Funding Status	M&A
Last Funding Type	Series B
Number of Employees	51-100

Pakistan not reaping the benefit of its creative minds

Blue Coat acquires cloud security startup Elastica for \$280M (Updated)

JORDAN NOVET @JORDANNOVET NOVEMBER 7, 2015 3:36 PM

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Stop seeing this ad

Number of Founded Organizations

1

CB Rank (Person)

827



Amir Khan

Co-Founder, CEO



Location

San Fran

Regions

San Fran

Gender

Male

LinkedIn

View on l

Amir Khan brings decades of experience in the Enterprise & Service Provider space. Prior to vi for Juniper's Enterprise routing portfolio...

Viptela Acquisition Enforces Cisco's Move to Software



Wyatt Carlson

May 2, 2017
3:49 pm MT

Email

LinkedIn

Facebook

Twitter

Reddit

Hacker News

Yesterday, Cisco said it intends to purchase software-defined wide area networking (SD-WAN) vendor Viptela for \$610 million in cash — further proving the networking giant's transition to software-based revenues.

Pakistan not reaping the benefit of its creative minds

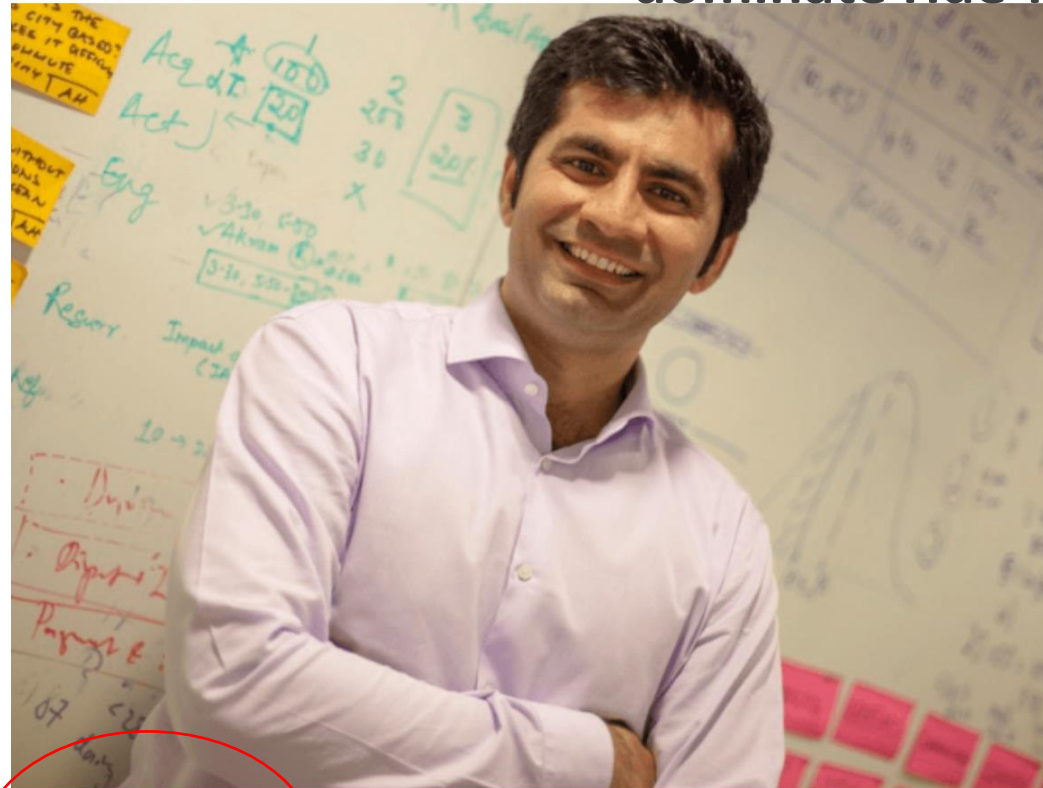
How this Pakistani built a billion-dollar startup

By Osman Husain Published: February 7, 2017

Pakistan not reaping the benefit of its creative minds

Uber buys rival Careem in \$3.1 billion deal to dominate ride-hailing in Middle East

Share 276 TWEET EMAIL



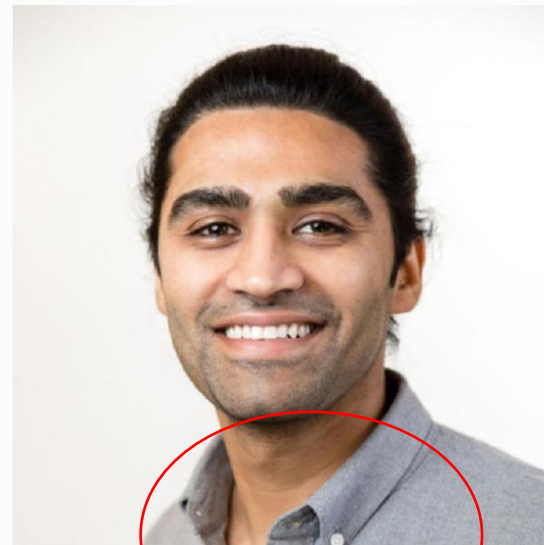
Careem's Mudassir Sheikha explains why growth needs to be an obsession for any motivated founder. PHOTO: CAREEM

Mudassir Sheikha is the CEO and co-founder of ride-hailing app Careem, one of the hottest startups on the Asian continent.

KeepTruckin Reaches **\$1.4B** Valuation After \$149M Fundraise In Latest Sign Of Cash Pouring Into Trucking Industry

Pakistan not reaping the benefit of its creative minds

- f** KeepTruckin raised \$149 million led by Greenoaks Capital to expand its
- t** technology for truckers in the latest sign of cash pouring into the trucking industry.
- in** The San Francisco-based company, which was on *Forbes' Next Billion-Dollar Startups list* last fall, has now reached the unicorn level with a valuation of \$1.4 billion.



KeepTruckin's Shoab Makani COURTESY OF
KEEPTRUCKIN



← MANAGEMENT

Zia Chishti

CEO

Zia serves as Chairman of the Board, and CEO of Afiniti. Prior to founding Afiniti, Zia was the founding Chairman and CEO of Align Technology, a medical device technology company that he led from startup to over a \$1 billion valuation on the NASDAQ.

Zia began his career in the mergers and acquisitions department of Morgan Stanley & Company in New York and London, and briefly served as a management consultant with McKinsey & Company in London.

Rampant FireEye Shares Makes Founder Ashar Aziz A Cybersecurity Billionaire



Pakistan not reaping the benefit of its creative minds

individual to that group.

Ashar Aziz, founder of cybersecurity firm FireEye, is the world's newest billionaire as shares in his company continue to skyrocket following a September initial public offering. Shares in the Milpitas, Calif.-based company are up 379% from its \$20 IPO price as of 12:50 pm in New York.

Aziz, as FireEye's largest individual shareholder and vice chairman, owns nearly 11 million shares in the company he founded in 2004. With options, Forbes estimates he is worth a little more than \$1 billion.



Government's Commitment to Entrepreneurship

- Establishment of the **Pakistan Startup Ecosystem Development Program** to support entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Launching the "**Startup Pakistan**" initiative to nurture 10,000 startups by providing mentorship, funding, and technical assistance.
- Implementation of the "**Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme**" to empower young entrepreneurs with interest-free loans and training programs.
- Creation of the **National Incubation Centers (NICs) and Accelerators** in major cities to provide startups with resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities.
- Formation of the **National Entrepreneurship Council (NEC)** to coordinate and streamline government efforts to promote entrepreneurship.
- Introduction of the "**Ease of Doing Business**" reforms to simplify business registration and reduce bureaucratic hurdles for startups.
- Establishment of the **Pakistan Single Window (PSW) portal** to facilitate ease of trade and commerce for entrepreneurs.
- Enactment of the **Pakistan Startup Act** to provide a regulatory framework for startups and innovative businesses.
- Launch of various **innovation and technology parks** to foster collaboration between academia, industry, and entrepreneurs.
- Collaboration with international organizations and development partners to provide **capacity-building programs and funding opportunities** for entrepreneurs.

National ICT R&D Fund **REBOOTED** as
Ignite
NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY FUND

NeuroTech
Artificial Intelligence
Big Data
Shared Economy
Cloud Infrastructure
Augmented & Virtual Reality
IoT
Robotics
3D/4D Printing
Blockchain



Have you heard of the SDG Weekend celebrations in Twin Cities already? Apart from the Hackathon and Innovation showcas...
[read more](#)



SDG Hackathon - Ignite Civic Innovation
August 19, 2017

Technology for the Greater Good





Higher Education Commission, Pakistan



Call for Applications

Turn Your Entrepreneurial Idea into a Successful Enterprise

Innovator Seed Fund (ISF) - 2022

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) invites innovative startups owned by students, alumni, and/or faculty members/researchers (from Public & Private Sector Universities/Degree Awarding Institutions) to apply for Innovator Seed Fund (ISF) Grant.

KEY FEATURES

ISF, envisioned for development of innovation and startup ecosystem in Pakistan, is a flagship initiative of HEC under the Higher Education Development in Pakistan Project (HEDP). ISF is anticipated to support development of fledgling startups having innovative ideas through provision of seed funding grants, to transform them into successful and sustainable enterprises. The grant package includes up to USD 35,000 in seed funding, stretched over startups proposed budgetary requirements for activities including but not limiting to entrepreneurial training, legal / financial / marketing training and support, among other services.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

The lead applicant must:

- Either be a student, alumni and/or faculty member / researcher of the Higher Education Institutions (public and private).
- Have endorsement from one of the HEC Established 35 Business Incubation Centers across Pakistan.
- Have an SECP-registered business concern, ensuring legal status and promising potential of the startup.

PRIORITY THEMES

The priority sectors for ISF support include:

- 1 Agriculture, Food Resources and Agri Tech
- 2 Housing, Construction and Manufacturing
- 3 Banking, Microfinance and FinTech
- 4 Health Care and Health Tech
- 5 Transportation and Logistics
- 6 Education and EdTech
- 7 E-commerce and Smart Retail
- 8 Sustainable Development, Climate and Energy
- 9 Emerging Technologies
- 10 Creative, Digital Media, Arts and Culture
- 11 Other sectors that have potential for growth and impact

Innovative Ideas / Concept Notes on prescribed application template must be submitted via HEC online portal.

<https://www.rfi.hec.gov.pk>

Deadline for Application Submission is January 6, 2023 - 11:59pm

For further information and application submission requirements please visit HEC website:

<http://www.hec.gov.pk/site/isf>

For queries, email at: isf@hec.gov.pk





TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Higher Education Commission aims "to facilitate institutions of higher learning to serve as engines for socio-economic development of Pakistan" as stated in the mission. Along these lines, Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan took an initiative to finance proposals of completed interdisciplinary applied research projects for prototype development and industrial value addition for technology development. In this way, HEC envisages to help the productive minds of Pakistan to impact economy through new and emerging technologies.

The proposals shall be submitted by PhD scholars who have completed their PhD and have a ready research in the following specified areas;

1. Telecommunication, Information and Technology/Computers (applications in Govt. services, health, textile, agriculture & dairy etc.)
2. Engineering Sciences, Micro Electronics, Water, Power, Energy and Fleet Management
3. Biotechnology and Allied fields (in Health, Agriculture, Textile, Leather & Dairy etc.)
4. Material Sciences/Man Made Material (Nanotechnology)
5. Robotics, Defence and Military needs
6. Any other applied discipline which is inductive or conducive to success of products developed or upscale the process of Industrial level manufacturing.

The proposed funded projects would be expected to develop a product or service which would positively impact, inter alia, the economy, solve a current problem, meet a market need, utilize local raw materials, move current products up the value chain, create large scale employment

The proposals need to be academia-industry joint projects leading to products or services which solve a current problem or identify a new opportunity; are marketable, leading to positive cash-

Important Links

[Introduction](#)[Achievements](#)[Objectives](#)[Eligibility Criterion](#)[How to Apply](#)[Useful Industrial links](#)[Downloads](#)[FAQs](#)[Contact Us](#)



NATIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR UNIVERSITIES

Introduction

Dearth of research literature/equipment is a major impediment to the productivity of many creative and talented faculty members/researchers in all disciplines in universities/degree awarding institutions. In most cases, researchers need substantial financial support for research projects to allow them in their research pursuits.

In the absence of such facilities researchers, specifically the younger ones, are discouraged and are forced to seek better opportunities in developed countries. To avoid this brain drain, the HEC has initiated a research grant program under which creative researchers are awarded research grants.

To meet the current challenges of researchers working in local universities/DAIs of Pakistan and to promote the R&D with facilitation, HEC is running the National Research Program for Universities (NRPU) as per researcher's needs/requirements. Following are the existing guidelines of NRPU that have been modified from time to time to address different aspects.

Last Updated: 02-11-2017 14:17



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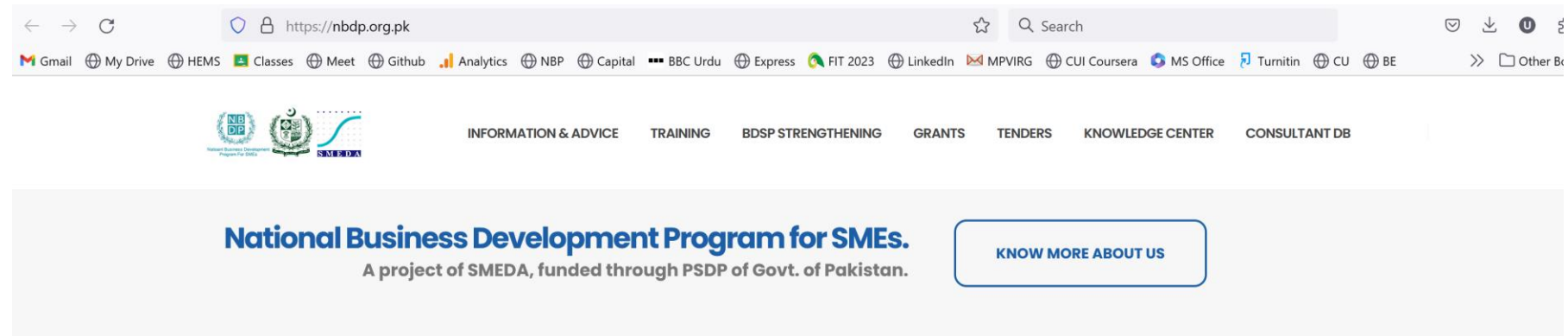


7

Important Links

[Introduction](#)[How to Apply](#)[Eligibility Criteria](#)[Related Downloads](#)[Guidelines for ORIC](#)[Terms and Conditions](#)[NRPU Policy Points](#)[Research Domain](#)[NRPU Approved Projects Awards 2016-17](#)

Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan



The screenshot shows the website for the National Business Development Program for SMEs. The browser address bar displays 'https://nbdp.org.pk'. The navigation menu includes: INFORMATION & ADVICE, TRAINING, BDSP STRENGTHENING, GRANTS, TENDERS, KNOWLEDGE CENTER, and CONSULTANT DB. The main banner features the text: **National Business Development Program for SMEs.** A project of SMEDA, funded through PSDP of Govt. of Pakistan. A button labeled 'KNOW MORE ABOUT US' is positioned to the right of the banner text.

NBDP Initiatives

Our Initiatives are to strengthen the small and medium businesses which help them to excel and grow to industrial level.



Training Programs



Grant Initiatives



BDSP Strengthening & Networking Initiative



One-on-One Consultancy Sessions (Helpdesks)


[VIEW ALL INITIATIVES](#)

Current entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan

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+92 42-111 111 456 Mon-Fri: 7:30 AM To 3:30 PM

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One stop shop for all of your **Business Needs!**

BUSINESS PLAN

Research Planning Team

How it and other

Policy

SME

Overview of Key Initiatives/Projects

Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program:

Launched by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, this program aims to provide financial and technical assistance to young entrepreneurs and aspiring youth in starting their businesses. The program offers low-cost loans, skill development training, and mentorship to help young entrepreneurs establish successful ventures.

Kamyab Kisan Program:

Although primarily targeted at farmers, this program includes initiatives to support agri-entrepreneurs and agribusiness startups. It provides financial and technical support to promote innovation in the agricultural sector and encourage rural entrepreneurship.

Ehsaas Kafaalat Program:

While not exclusively an entrepreneurship program, Ehsaas Kafaalat provides financial assistance to deserving women to start or expand their small businesses. The program aims to empower women entrepreneurs and support their economic participation.

Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal Entrepreneurship Scheme:

Under this scheme, the government provides financial support to entrepreneurs with special focus on persons with disabilities, widows, and low-income individuals. It offers financial assistance, training, and market linkages to help these entrepreneurs establish and grow their businesses.

National Incubation Centers (NICs):

The government has established several National Incubation Centers (NICs) in major cities to support early-stage startups and entrepreneurs. NICs provide co-working spaces, mentorship, access to investors, and networking opportunities to nurture the growth of innovative ventures.

Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs):

Operated under the Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan), TISCs aim to promote innovation and support technology-based entrepreneurs. They provide access to patent information, training on intellectual property rights, and assistance in commercializing innovative ideas.

Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) Initiatives:

PSEB runs various programs to support the growth of the IT and software industry in Pakistan, including financial incentives, training, and facilitation for IT startups.

And many more which are not covered here

Access to Finance

Prime Minister's Youth Loan Program (Kamyab Jawan Program):

The program offers small business loans to young entrepreneurs between the ages of 21 and 45 years.

Three categories of loans are available: "Kamyab Kisan" for agriculture-related businesses, "Kamyab Karobar" for general businesses, and "Kamyab Hunarmand" for skilled individuals seeking financial support to start their own ventures.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Bank:

SME Bank provides financial services, including loans and credit facilities, to small and medium-sized enterprises across various sectors.

The bank aims to address the financing needs of SMEs and support their growth and development.

National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) Loan Schemes:

NBP offers several loan schemes for startups and small businesses, including the "Saanjh" scheme for young entrepreneurs and the "Kissan Dost Agri Finance" scheme for agribusinesses.

First Women Bank Limited (FWBL) Financing Schemes:

FWBL provides financing solutions to women entrepreneurs and small business owners through schemes like the "Roshan Har Qadam" scheme and "First Gem" finance program.

Punjab Rozgar Scheme:

Launched by the Government of Punjab, this scheme offers low-cost loans to unemployed youth in the province to start their own businesses.

It aims to promote self-employment and job creation among young individuals.

Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Interest-Free Loans:

Under this initiative, interest-free loans are provided to BISP beneficiaries to help them establish and grow small businesses.

The goal is to empower low-income individuals and support their economic upliftment.

Export Finance Scheme and Long-Term Finance Facility:

These financing schemes are designed to support export-oriented industries and provide financial assistance for their working capital and long-term investment needs.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Refinancing Schemes:

SBP offers various refinancing schemes through commercial banks to support priority sectors, including agriculture, small businesses, and renewable energy projects.

And many more not mentioned here

Business Incubation and Acceleration

National Incubation Centers (NICs):

The National Incubation Centers (NICs) have been established in major cities, including Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi, with the support of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication and other stakeholders. NICs provide co-working spaces, mentorship, training programs, access to investors, and networking opportunities to startups. These incubators focus on various sectors, including technology, innovation, and social entrepreneurship.

Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) Technology Incubators:

The Punjab government, through PITB, has set up technology incubators to support tech-based startups in the province. These incubators offer mentorship, technical support, and access to a network of industry experts and investors.

KPITB Innovation Fellowship Program:

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board (KPITB) has launched the Innovation Fellowship Program to nurture startups and innovative ideas. Selected fellows receive mentorship, funding, and access to resources to turn their ideas into viable businesses.

Women's Business Incubation Center (WBIC):

The government has set up the Women's Business Incubation Center (WBIC) to empower women entrepreneurs by providing a conducive environment for their business growth. WBIC offers training, mentoring, and networking opportunities exclusively for women-led startups.

Fauji Foundation Business Incubation Center:

The Fauji Foundation, a welfare trust in Pakistan, has established a business incubation center to support startups in various sectors. The incubator offers mentoring, business development support, and access to financial assistance for entrepreneurs.

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) Incubation Program:

PPAF has launched an incubation program to support social entrepreneurs and startups that address poverty-related challenges. The program provides mentorship, training, and access to funding to create a positive social impact.

University-Based Incubators:

Many universities in Pakistan have set up their own incubators to support student entrepreneurs and startups emerging from academic institutions. These incubators offer a nurturing environment, access to university resources, and networking opportunities.

Skill Development and Training



Entrepreneurship Training Programs by (SMEDA):

SMEDA offers entrepreneurship training programs to help individuals **develop business acumen, understand market dynamics, and learn essential entrepreneurial skills.**

These programs cover topics such as **business planning, marketing strategies, financial management, and legal requirements** for starting a business.



Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reforms:

The government is working on TVET reforms to **enhance the quality of technical education and training** in Pakistan.

These reforms aim to equip aspiring entrepreneurs with **practical skills and knowledge in various trades and industries.**



Vocational Training Institutes:

The government has established vocational training institutes across the country to **provide hands-on training in various trades and professions.**

These institutes offer skill development courses that can empower individuals to **start their own businesses or become self-employed.**



Youth Skills Development Program:

Under the Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program, the government has launched the Youth Skills Development Program.

This program provides **skill development training to youth, enabling them to explore entrepreneurship as a career option.**



Skill Development Councils (SDCs):

SDCs collaborate with industries to design and offer **demand-driven skill development training programs.**

These programs aim to **bridge the gap between the skills required by the job market and the skills possessed by potential entrepreneurs.**



Technical Assistance for Business Development:

Various government departments and organizations offer technical assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs through **workshops, seminars, and business clinics.**

This assistance helps entrepreneurs **refine their business ideas, develop business plans, and acquire the knowledge needed to succeed in their ventures.**



Capacity Building Programs by Chambers of Commerce

Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Pakistan conduct **capacity building programs for entrepreneurs and small business owners.**

These programs cover a wide range of topics, including **market research, export-import procedures, finance management, and entrepreneurship development.**



Incubator and Accelerator Training Programs:

Incubators and accelerators, such as **National Incubation Centers (NICs)**, offer **training sessions, workshops, and mentoring to startup founders.**

These programs focus on **refining business models, validating ideas, and preparing entrepreneurs** for market entry.

Policy Reforms and Regulatory Support

Establishment of the Pakistan Single Window (PSW) Portal:	<p>The PSW portal integrates and simplifies the regulatory requirements for starting and operating a business.</p> <p>It provides a one-stop platform for businesses to submit applications, obtain permits, licenses, and clearances from multiple government departments and agencies.</p>
Introduction of Online Business Registration:	<p>The government has implemented an online business registration system to facilitate entrepreneurs in registering their businesses quickly and efficiently.</p> <p>This digital platform allows businesses to complete registration processes and submit required documents online, reducing the time and effort required for registration.</p>
Reduction in Business Registration Fees and Processing Time:	<p>The government has reduced business registration fees and processing time to make it more affordable and faster for entrepreneurs to formalize their businesses.</p> <p>This measure aims to encourage more informal businesses to register and operate within the formal economy.</p>
Reforms in Taxation and Filing Procedures:	<p>The government has introduced reforms to simplify tax filing procedures for businesses, reducing compliance burdens.</p> <p>Initiatives like the introduction of e-filing for tax returns aim to make the taxation process more efficient and transparent.</p>
Insolvency and Bankruptcy Reforms:	<p>The introduction of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code aims to provide a legal framework for efficient and timely resolution of insolvency cases.</p> <p>This reform helps businesses in distress to restructure and rehabilitate, reducing the risks associated with entrepreneurship.</p>
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Protection:	<p>The government has strengthened the protection of intellectual property rights, making it easier for businesses to safeguard their innovations, trademarks, and copyrights.</p> <p>Improved IPR protection encourages innovation and creativity, fostering a more innovative business environment.</p>
Online Access to Government Services and Information:	<p>Various government services and information related to starting and running a business are now available online.</p> <p>This digitalization initiative enables entrepreneurs to access information, forms, and applications from the comfort of their homes or offices.</p>
Support for Ease of Doing Business Reforms:	<p>The government actively participates in the World Bank's "Doing Business" report, aiming to improve Pakistan's ranking in ease of doing business indicators.</p> <p>Reforms are undertaken in response to the report's recommendations, focusing on areas like obtaining construction permits, getting electricity connections, and cross-border trade facilitation.</p>

Women Entrepreneurship

Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program:

- The Kamyab Jawan Program includes a specific component called "Kamyab Kisan" to support rural women entrepreneurs involved in agriculture-related businesses.
- Under this program, women entrepreneurs can access low-cost loans to start or expand their agricultural ventures.

Women Entrepreneurship Program by Akhuwat Foundation:

- Akhuwat Foundation, a leading microfinance organization, launched a Women Entrepreneurship Program to provide interest-free loans to women entrepreneurs.
- The program aims to empower women economically and help them establish and grow their small businesses.

First Women Bank Limited (FWBL) Financing Schemes:

- FWBL offers various financing schemes exclusively for women entrepreneurs, such as "Roshan Har Qadam" and "First Gem" finance program.
- These schemes provide financial assistance to women-led startups and businesses.

Women Business Incubation Center (WBIC):

- The government has established the Women Business Incubation Center (WBIC) to support women entrepreneurs.
- WBIC provides a nurturing environment, training, mentoring, and networking opportunities to women-led startups.

Success Stories and Impact

Sheops - Women's E-commerce Platform:	Nadia Patel Gangjee, a Pakistani entrepreneur, co-founded "Sheops" an e-commerce platform exclusively for women, where they can buy and sell products. Through her participation in the "Women Entrepreneurship Program" by Akhuwat Foundation, Nadia received an interest-free loan to launch and scale her business. The government's support helped Sheops expand its reach and empower countless women across Pakistan to become entrepreneurs and access a larger market for their products.
Aurat Raaj - Empowering Women through Tech:	Sara Saeed, a Pakistani entrepreneur, founded "Aurat Raaj" a social enterprise that focuses on empowering women through technology and digital content. Sara participated in various government-supported incubation and accelerator programs, including the National Incubation Centers (NICs), which provided mentorship and resources to her venture. With government support, Aurat Raaj has been able to create awareness and provide crucial information on women's health, rights, and gender equality to communities across the country.
MandiExpress - Fresh Produce Delivery:	Muhammad Mustafa, a young entrepreneur, founded "MandiExpress" an online platform that delivers fresh produce from farms directly to consumers' doorsteps. Through the Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program, Muhammad Mustafa accessed financial support and training to grow his business and expand its operations. With government support, MandiExpress has not only become a successful venture but also contributes to reducing the supply chain gaps in the agriculture sector, benefiting both farmers and consumers.
Cowlar - IoT Solutions for Livestock:	Umer Adnan, an entrepreneur and innovator, co-founded "Cowlar" a startup that provides IoT-based solutions to monitor and improve the health and productivity of livestock. Umer received support from various government-backed incubators and accelerators, which helped Cowlar secure funding and gain access to industry experts. The government's support enabled Cowlar to scale its operations and introduce technological advancements in Pakistan's agriculture sector, benefiting farmers and improving livestock management practices.

Challenges

1. Access to Finance for Early-Stage Startups:

1. **Challenge:** Despite the availability of government-backed financing programs, **many early-stage startups still face challenges in accessing funding, especially at the seed and pre-seed stages.**
2. **Improvement Plan:** To address this, the **government can collaborate with private investors and venture capital firms** to create more seed funds and angel investor networks. Additionally, providing risk-sharing mechanisms or guarantees for early-stage investments can help attract more private sector funding into the startup ecosystem.

2. Complex Bureaucratic Processes:

1. **Challenge:** Despite efforts to streamline processes, **bureaucratic red tape and complex regulatory procedures can still pose obstacles** to entrepreneurs during business registration and operations.
2. **Improvement Plan:** The **government should continue to focus on simplifying and digitizing administrative processes**, reducing the number of required approvals, and establishing the Pakistan Single Window (PSW) as a centralized platform for all necessary clearances and permits.

3. Capacity Building and Skill Development:

1. **Challenge:** Many aspiring **entrepreneurs lack the necessary business skills and knowledge** required to run a successful venture.
2. **Improvement Plan:** The government can **enhance capacity-building programs and entrepreneurship training** to cover a broader range of topics, including marketing, financial management, digital literacy, and innovation. Partnering with educational institutions and industry experts can also improve the quality and relevance of training programs.

4. Access to Market and Export Opportunities:

1. **Challenge:** Startups often face **challenges in accessing domestic and international markets**, limiting their growth potential.
2. **Improvement Plan:** The government can **establish trade facilitation centers and export promotion initiatives** to connect startups with potential customers and export markets. Additionally, providing market intelligence and support for market entry can help startups explore new business opportunities.

Challenges

5. Gender Disparity in Entrepreneurship:

1. **Challenge:** Women entrepreneurs still **face cultural and societal barriers**, limiting their participation in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.
2. **Improvement Plan:** Specific initiatives should be designed to address these barriers, such as **providing targeted training, mentorship, and financial support** for women entrepreneurs. Increasing awareness and promoting role models can also encourage more women to venture into entrepreneurship.

6. Sustainability and Scaling of Incubators:

1. **Challenge:** The **sustainability and scalability of incubators and accelerators** are essential for their long-term impact.
2. **Improvement Plan:** The government can focus on **creating a sustainable funding model for incubators, attracting private sector investments, and establishing partnerships with corporate entities**. Monitoring and evaluating the performance of incubators can also help identify areas for improvement and resource allocation.

7. Awareness and Outreach:

1. **Challenge:** Despite the availability of government initiatives, some **potential entrepreneurs might not be aware of the support available** to them.
2. **Improvement Plan:** Increasing awareness and outreach efforts through **digital campaigns, roadshows, and partnerships with educational institutions and community organizations** can help reach a broader audience of aspiring entrepreneurs.

Challenges faced

- **Lack of Educational System of Pakistan:** Today's mentors are not concerned with the possibility of a concept being commercially supported; rather all they care about is the theoretical standing of it. Their major aim is to complete the course within the given time, the practical implication of things do not matter to them.
- **Lack of Legal Support System:** The regulatory framework in Pakistan is too complex and over cautionary. There are overcomplicated laws that need to be decrypted to make them startup-friendly. It would be better if the government simplify procedures and run awareness campaigns to support and sustain the start-up culture.
- **No Monitoring or Communication on Innovation:** Young entrepreneurs go by a set of rules, which is formulated with the help of a business plan. This idea stops them from experiencing new waves, there is no room for risks, therefore flexibility is nowhere to be seen. The thinking of most young entrepreneurs is usually what comes in their way to success; they spend so much time in thinking of ways to seem successful, rather than actually working towards and being successful.
- **Lack of Attention and Encouragement:** The young entrepreneurs, all they need is a little attention and encouragement. The young entrepreneurs who are planning to introduce themselves and their start-up in the market, are let down by some of the known names, that they are not going to survive the market pressure. This led to the discouragement of a huge group of young people, who would have considered entering entrepreneurship. In Pakistan, if you want to get something done, or even if you want to bring out new things in the market, you must have a link, otherwise get ready to head home disappointed.
- **Focus on Money v/s Team building:** Many new entrepreneurs focus on money too soon, whereas, in the initial stages, more focus should be on team building, brand building and product/service streamlining. The right team can make you grow exponentially, and the wrong team can have you stuck at best and bankrupt at worst. Entrepreneurs should focus on building a quality product/service and company environment in the short run as opposed to expecting a lot of ROI.

Summing up: The challenge of being an entrepreneur is in being able to turn constraints into advantages for fun and profit and enjoy the journey as well as the destination. Entrepreneurs need to celebrate the fact that constraints and limitations are a source of opportunity in the marketplace, and a source of profit and competitive advantage inside the business.



Ikram Rana

Software Strategist/Consultant | AI Solutions Enthusiast | Founder | Lawyer |
Helping people with their business ventures


Published Sep 3, 2019

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/challenges-faced-new-entrepreneurs-pakistan-ikram-rana>

Great examples in the post below + a great site to understand your options.

<https://www.nocode.tech/>

#nocode #mvp

 **Mahmoud Khodor** · 2nd
12h · 🌐 + Follow

I was talking to a founder that wasted more than 100,000 USD on a dev agency to build an MVP, without validating his idea.

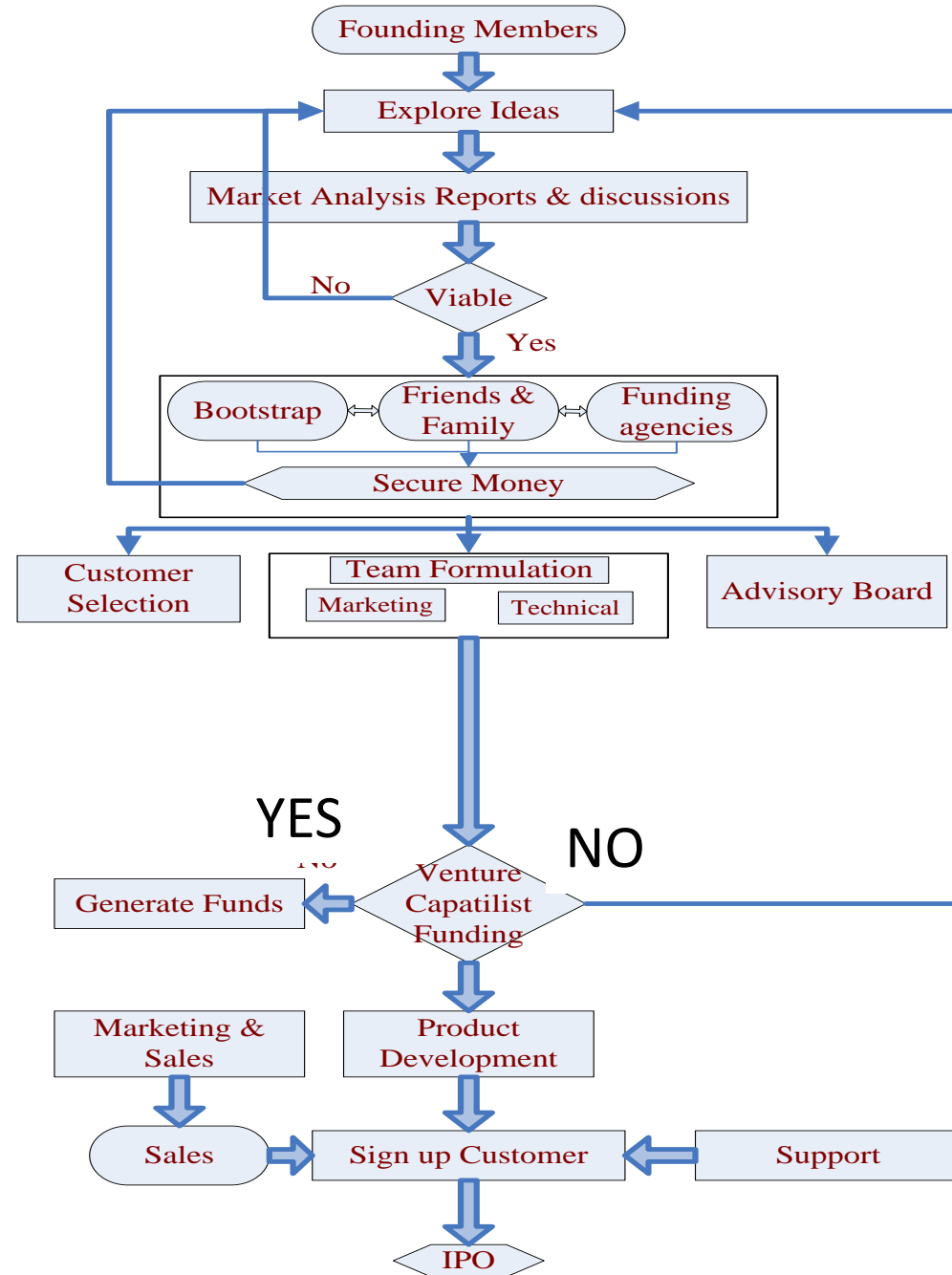
As you imagine, the money went down the drain, because he fell into the trap of developing a solution for a problem that he was suffering from, without validating his assumptions or interviewing anyone else.

Please make use of no-code tools, it is not that hard, once you have an idea create a landing page using Webflow and run Meta ads, 25 \$ per day is more than enough for ads.

if you saw engagement, then you can get a lot done by using

- [Webflow](#) for the front end
- [Airtable](#) for Database
- [Zapier](#) for backend
- [Stripe](#) for payment gateway
- [Memberstack \(YC S20\)](#) for subscription

Starting a Startup



The Whole Story



منزلوں تک میں نہ پہنچا بھی تو کیا
منزلوں کا اک نشان تو بن گیا ہوں



Conclusion

- **Innovation Driven Entrepreneurship** is very critical for Pakistan to progress
- **We need to establish a complete and vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem**
- **We then need to motivate our creative minds to establish innovation driven startups** and while we provide them with the ecosystem that takes them to create unicorns



Establishing an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem



ساختیوں توڑ دو شب کی دیوار کو
کوئی سورج ہمیں سے نکل آئے گا
کام مل کے کرو محنتوں سے اگر
سب خزیینا ہیں سے نکل آئے گا

13 جنوری
2019

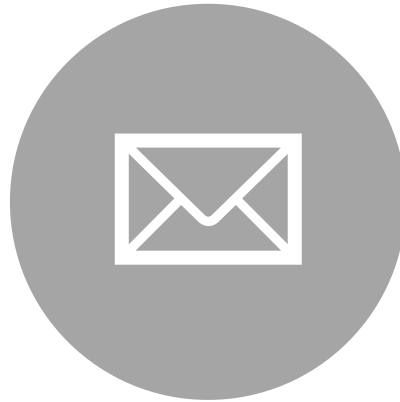
Motivating creative minds

کبھی تو جھانک لے تو اپنے اندر
دما دم مست ہے تو اک قلندر
کہ یوں ساحل سے کیوں ٹکرا رہا ہے؟
نکل لہروں سے اب ہو جا سمندر





USAMABAJWA@CUILAHORE.EDU.PK



USAMA@USAMAIJAZ.COM



[HTTPS://PK.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/USAMABAJWA](https://pk.linkedin.com/in/usamabajwa)



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