EXTRAORDINARY **Registered No. M324**

The Sindh Government Gazette

Published by Authority

KARACHI THURSDAY MAY 18, 2023

PART-I

GOVERNMENT OF SINDH
FOREST & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT
Karachi, dated the 11th May, 2023

No. FT&WL(SOI)Forest Policy (2023): Consequent upon emerging needs of climate change mitigation and adaptation, the Provincial Government (Cabinet) in its meeting held on 12th April, 2023, are pleased to approve the Sindh Sustainable Forest Management Policy, 2019 (Amended 2023) for furtherance the objectives and to carry out the purposes of the Forest Act 1927 and Rules or Regulations made thereunder. The said Policy is hereby notified to be published in the official gazette with immediate effect for the information of general public and as follows:-

1. **Preamble**

1.1 Sindh spans over 34.84 million acres out of which 10% **(3,437,880 acres)** approximately are designated state forest-lands and rangelands under the administrative control of forestry department. These include Riverine Forests **(595,511 acres)**, Irrigated Plantations **(202,622 acres)**, Mangroves **(1,500,000 acres)** and Rangelands **(1,129,247 acres)**. As per provisions of the Forest Act 1927, the Riverine Forests and Irrigated Plantations fall in the legal category of "Reserved Forests", whereas Mangroves and Rangelands are categorized as "Protected Forests".

1.2 Rangelands constitute 'protected forests' under the Forest Act which play important role in stabilizing the fragile desert ecosystem for attaining the livelihood of people by supporting the livestock production and conservation of wildlife and its habitats. Over grazing, fuel-wood cutting, increased population pressure and climate change induced events, such as droughts have caused degradation of rangelands.

1.3 Mangroves of Sindh being 6th largest in Asia, provide valuable economic and ecological services which includes support to marine fisheries, climate change mitigation, coastal protection, coastal disaster risks reduction, biodiversity conservation and public amenity. Water withdrawals **at rim stations for agriculture** and leaving inadequate natural flow of fresh water, less than 10.0 million-acre feet, have significantly negative impact on the health of Mangroves and has caused sea intrusion in coastline agriculture zone.

1.4 The naturally growing Riverine Forests exist along both sides of the River Indus, right from Guddu Barrage down to Indus delta. This has remained the main stay of *forestry in Sindh, meeting the environmental balance and livelihood needs of* peoples of Sindh. Currently these forests are heavily degraded, with no exact data on the stocking quality and extent.

1.5 The forestlands designated as Irrigated Plantations are high valued productive lands but remained underutilized for forestry production being under immense pressures for agriculture cultivations. This forest type covers relatively smaller area and has suffered from water stresses and conversion to agriculture, due to agroforestry leases and encroachments.

1.6 The stocking had not been scientifically inventoried since time immemorial and the yield used to be regulated through short term felling (harvesting) programmes based on subjective and ocular approaches. The first ever scientific inventory of state reserved forests in Sindh province was conducted during 1994, which revealed that 21 per cent area of Riverine Forests (106,210 acres) and 17 per cent area of Irrigated plantations (32,110 acres) were under cover of productive commercial tree species. The remaining forest area was degraded and occupied by non-commercial woody vegetation. Since then, no updated scientific inventory of state forests in Sindh has been conducted. **However, in 2007, state forestlands were reported to cover 2.5 per cent of the provincial geographical area.**

1.7 Several factors have contributed to the decline in forest cover such as, unscientific harvesting, non-reforestation of harvested areas, weak law enforcement capacity of the Forestry administration, decline in river flows and low priority assigned to forestry sector in financial resource allocation. Added to it are demographic pressures, market forces, lack of wood alternatives, land-grabbing and abuse of Agroforestry Policy.

1.8 For a major part, the acute problem of deforestation and related erosion of governance and capacity stems from lacking or incoherent and patchy policies, that are weakly implemented as exemplified by the Agroforestry Lease Policy of 2005. That, by all accounts, has been counterproductive and detrimental for the forests. In the process, the fertile forestlands remained under agri-cultivation undermining its forestry component / commitments. Consequently, local communities, traditionally dependent on the forests for their livelihoods in shape of wood for domestic use and fodder for livestock have badly suffered. The fragile biodiversity of Riverine eco-region is at peril, resulting in catastrophic flood regimes.

1.9 Forestry and its forest management, have undergone a paradigm shift globally as production of timber, fuel wood and fodder are no longer considered as the primary objectives. Forests are now principally conserved and managed for provision of Non- Timber Forest Products, Carbon off-setting and environmental services such as, climate regulation, soil and water conservation, biodiversity conservation, pollution control and protection against natural disasters.

1.10 Forestry management is a long term enterprise, the impacts of actions require *longer gestation period and, are seldom* visible immediately. It requires a lot of forethought and consistency in actions to benefit the society, through successive generations. Therefore, more than any other sectors of the economy, forestry demands stable policies with assured financial resources, that are futuristic in their orientation and are consistently applied over the years.

1.11 Accordingly, acknowledging its responsibility emanating from forests being a provincial subject under the constitution of Pakistan the Government of Sindh sets out its forest policy to exhibit its strong resolve and commitment to conserve and manage its forestry resources for the benefit of its people and the global society at large.

2. Vision, mission & objectives of the policy.

2.1 Vision

The forest policy envisions a future in which ***'forest ecosystems are healthy for the wellbeing and more prosperous future of its people and the global society'.***

It entails ***'Forests for People and Planet'*** as a Tagline. This is premised on forestry in Sindh regaining its past glory by restituting and restoring the forest lands to full forest cover, which is sustainably managed and expanded. It espouses futuristic and inclusive approach for sustainable management of forestry resources for the benefit of society and transforming greener and environment friendly Sindh.

2.2 Mission

To maintain, restore, enhance and sustainably manage the forest resources of Sindh by following highest standards of professional forestry, promoting public awareness and participation, strengthening institutional capacities, and mobilizing stakeholders' support'.

2.3 Objectives, Targets & Strategies (2035)

The targets and strategies for each of the listed policy objectives are as under: -

2.3.1 Governance: The governance of forestry is improved with corresponding increase in government's commitment, capacity, resolve and motivation for ensuring an effective and accountable implementation of the Forest policy;

2.3.1.1 The forestry administration is strengthened, empowering the relevant rank and file of the organization for merit-based, transparent and accountable forestry governance.

(i) Reviewing the current delegation of administrative and financial powers and updating the same to facilitate the appropriate working of department.

(ii) The duties and responsibilities of various tiers of forestry administration described in forest manual are reviewed and improved to ensure due accountability.

(iii) The Forest Act 1927, shall be reviewed and revised, keeping in view the present and future situation and circumstances.

(Iv) An effective monitoring and reporting mechanism is in place (such as, MPR, MIS, GIS, etc.) to ensure good governance.

(v) Ensure compliance of estacode regarding posting and tenure security (2 years) of officers. Premature transfer shall be considered as punishment.

(vi) Encouraging and supporting the creation and operation of networks of professional peer groups and civil society fora for advocacy and struggle on forest conservation and expansion.

2.3.1.2 The Sindh Forest &Wildlife Administrative Department effectively coordinates, oversees and provides the requisite support for the implementation of the policy.

(i) Administrative department effectively coordinates with Planning & Development, Finance Department, Services General Administration & Coordination Department and other departments / agencies and keeps them informed and engaged for mobilizing their support for the forest policy, if and as needed.

(ii) A steering committee is in place to extend support for coordinated and effective implementation.

(iii) The work of the Policy Monitoring and Steering Committee is supported by a well-resourced policy monitoring unit headed by a senior professional operating, within the Administrative Department.

2.3.1.3 Forestry sector is assigned higher priority in provincial development portfolio and empowered for planning and decision-making processes to promote corporate financing for tree raising.

(i) More priority is given to forestry sector in annual development portfolio.

(ii) New sectorial development policies and projects shall be consistent with the objectives of this policy and provisions of Forest Act 1927 to enhance tree cover in Sindh.

(iii) Grant of state lands in relaxation to Land Grant Policy, adjoining the reserved and protected areas shall be discouraged.

(iv) Where available, new areas (state lands, wastelands, wetlands) suitable for forestry and wildlife conservation are brought in domain of Forest Act 1927.

2.3.1.4 Forest land is safeguarded by exercising strict restraint on its diversion for non-forestry purposes, and strict oversight on compliance of the conditions.

(i) The encroached forestlands are retrieved from occupiers without any discrimination and are brought back under the full administrative control of the department.

(ii) The illegal allotments of forest lands by Revenue Authorities are cancelled by the Board of Revenue Authorities and new such allotments are declared as cognizable offence.

(iii) The illegally allotted lands will be retrieved after cancellation of such allotments and made available for 100% afforestation.

(iv) GIS based MIS systems are introduced to bring transparency in forest land management.

2.3.2 Climate Change Mitigation and Ecosystem Services: Address climate change mitigation and adaptation in forestry, agriculture and urban areas through harnessing the opportunities under the available mechanisms such as, REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus), promoting carbon sinks on designated forestlands, farmlands and urban greens.

2.3.2.1 Relevant opportunities of seeking financial & technical assistance under various national and global policies and agreements are harnessed such as, REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation plus), GCF (Green Climate Fund), etc. for promoting and developing carbon sinks on designated forestlands, farmlands and urban greens.

(i) Design and undertake implementation of REDD+ and all other PES (Payment for Ecosystem Services) schemes in forest areas of Sindh.

(ii) Build capacities of forestry staff in REDD+ and PES concepts especially forest carbon accounting and scientific monitoring.

2.3.2.2 One or more successful examples in each of the key areas of carbon sequestration, payment for ecosystem services, biodiversity conservation, carbon offsets, and flood regulation are introduced.

(i) Create enabling institutional and legal frameworks for implementation of REDD+ trading of forest carbon in compliance and voluntary carbon markets and PES schemes.

(ii) Following the suit of Blue Carbon project in Mangroves, the similar projects in Riverine, Inland and Social Forestry components are under taken for Carbon Sequestration and trading.

2.3.3. Riverine Forests and Irrigated Plantations: The state-owned riverine forests and irrigated plantations are fully restituted, reforested and managed in the most sustainable and efficient ways, to enhance tree crop for climate change mitigation and Carbon-off setting/ trading.

2.3.3.1 The vacated forest lands are restored through natural regeneration and planting or seeding, to allow for revival of lost cover of riverine forests over the ensuing 5-10 year period under mainly private investment (through Public Private Partnership) and Government finance for carbon sequestration benefits to address climate change in collaboration with local communities.

(i) The state-owned riverine forests and irrigated plantations are fully restituted, reforested and managed in the most sustainable and efficient ways, to enhance tree crop for climate change mitigation and Carbon-off setting / trading.

(ii) Strict enforcement assistance at afforestation division level would be aiming for quickest possible encroachment vacation through enforcement to reduce entire encroachment in one-year time.

(iii) Encroachment removal drive(s) at the forest division level will be undertaken, backed by district administration, law enforcement agencies and judiciary for retrieval of encroached forestlands.

(iv) Retrieved lands would be available for 100% afforestation through either Public Private Partnership arrangements and / or Public Finance for Carbon benefits.

(v) Management plan(s) covering all forest types are prepared for their sustainable management backed by specific forest-wise operational plans as required.

2.3.3.2 Riverine landscape is restored and predominantly managed for regulating and supporting ecosystem services, compatible with the primary purpose of forest conservation that includes, climate change, flood regulation, wildlife habitat, public amenity, nature-based tourism, honey production and such other nature dependent industries.

(i) To bring forest cover back on 100% plant able area under the instant policy involving mainly private sectors investment in forest raising and protection through effective contractual agreements under Public Private Partnership mode.

(ii) The approved amended policy by Sindh Cabinet will be made advertised to call EOI from interested companies to invest in forest raising and protection for Carbon stocking & trading.

(iii) Specific forestlands would be made available as per partnership framework for afforestation through private financing.

(iv) New policy framework aims to raise 100% plant-able area under forest, for which pre-feasibility studies of target areas shall be undertaken to develop transparent cost benefit sharing document for attracting the investors.

(v) It is important that the fragile riverine Forest Ecosystem where feasible shall be protected, maintained in its natural form and managed for regulating and supporting ecosystem services with primary purpose of Forest & Wildlife biodiversity conservation.

2.3.3.3 Opportunities of partnership with private sector, are explored and introduced for forest conservation under benefit-sharing mechanisms to minimize reliance on provincial exchequer. Besides other options this includes coconut/oil palm plantations in coastal belt forest areas and limited Floriculture, Apiculture, Horticulture interventions under PPP mode agreements.

(i) The forest blocks comprising of 5,000 acres and above shall be selected / earmarked in Riverine forests for PP mode financed project for tree raising preferably for Carbon credit generation and trading as per prescribed cost benefits sharing.

(ii) The Forest blocks comprising of 2,000 acres and above shall be selected/earmarked in Irrigated plantations for PP mode financed carbon project and for raising fast growing tree species under commercial forestry in collaboration with wood based industries.

(iii) Project Design Documents for carbon specific target areas are prepared.

2.3.4 Mangrove Forests: Mangrove ecosystem(s) of Sindh are continued to be conserved, restored, expanded and sustainably managed as key natural assets supporting human-wellbeing, security of the coastal communities, mitigating climate change and realization of revenue through carbon trading;

2.3.4.1 The momentum of protection, restoration and expansion of mangrove forest cover is maintained, managing them sustainably under adequate management plan(s) / project design documents.

(i) Developing a coherent and robust plan addressing the underlying causes of mangroves degradation and current and future threats facing these forests, with a corresponding financing plan for priority activities agreed with the key stakeholders.

(ii) Focusing on maximizing the ecological, economic benefits of mangrove forests, explore and harness the mangrove forests role in carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation and adaptation. In doing so, integrating local fisherman communities, civil society organizations, and relevant agencies to further energize the drive for the restoration and management of the mangrove forests;

(iii) Consciously undertaking an advocacy role particularly around (a) increasing the freshwater flow into the delta (b) the avoidance of the disposal of solid and untreated municipal waste in the Indus delta and coastal region.

(iv) Documenting and communicating the success story of mangroves restoration through social media, television, exhibitions, hosting visits of opinion makers, and participation in relevant conferences to attract more support for the cause.

2.3.4.2 The mangrove forest cover is further expanded against the baseline.

(i) Establishing a credible updated socio-ecological baseline of the mangrove forests - status, magnitude, quality, value and economic benefits of the forests in the first year of commencement of this policy.

(ii) Developing schemes for restoration and expansion of mangroves through government and donor funding shall be envisaged.

2.3.4.3 Economic values of mangrove ecosystem are assessed and disseminated at various public and political forums to discourage conversion of mangroves for industrial and urban development.

(i) Encouraging and facilitating the respective Port authorities for creating a network or membership club where, under the leadership of the forest department, institutional club members impacting, or benefiting from, the mangrove forests discuss and address challenges facing these forests

(ii) Establishing a closer working relationship with the Sindh Environment Protection Agency to ensure regulatory compliance related to mangroves and preparing guidelines for compensatory/offset plantings to mitigate the unavoidable loss to mangroves, resulting from development projects.

(iii) Establish partnerships with academia and research organization to undertake economic valuation studies for mangrove ecosystems in the Indus Delta.

(iv) Prioritizing and selecting areas for mangrove planting that apart from technical feasibility, enable covering as much of the delta as possibly particularly focusing on ecological and economic benefits such as mitigating sea intrusion, reducing coastal erosion, protecting costal population and infrastructure and carbon sequestration (such as under REDD+).

(v) Strengthening management, legal and prosecution infrastructure with in the Forest Department and other agencies responsible for managing mangrove forests to take timely cognizance of any threats to mangroves and ward them off.

2.3.4.4 Partnerships are built to harness opportunities of nature-based ecotourism in mangroves and for promoting investment by the private sector for creating jobs and alternate economy instead of consumptive use of these forests.

2.3.5 Rangelands: The ecosystem values and benefits of the rangelands designated as 'protected forests' are enhanced;

2.3.5.1 The land tenure and geo-referenced boundaries of the rangelands designated as 'protected forests' are documented.

(i) Undertake study to document land-tenure and conflicts within the rangelands designated as 'protected forests'.

2.3.5.2 The socio-ecological baseline of rangelands is established.

(i) Undertaking a systematic survey by a multidisciplinary team with regard to bio-physical, socio-economic, institutional and technical aspects of the rangelands in each contiguous rangeland or groups of them when they are in proximity and conditions are similar.

(ii) Using the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) or other suitable tool to assess the health of the range as well as drought or precipitation trends.

2.3.5.3 Productivity, ecosystem's health, and economic benefits of the designated rangelands are amplified as a measure of sustainable management of rangeland resources.

(i) Preparation of adequate and high quality long and medium-term Integrated Range Ecosystem Management Plans (IREMP). Effective implementation of approved management plans for:

(a) Reversing the process of land degradation and desertification.
(b) Improving the health and productivity of the rangeland
(c) Enhancing Regulatory Control, and
(d) Pursuing integrated and sustainable range, livestock management practices.

(ii) Enhancing the administrative capacity of the Forest Department for effective regulation and management of the range resources.

(iii) Organizing and engaging local pastoral communities and rangeland users, including women, with explicit roles and responsibilities in planning and management of the system particularly in view of climate change, overgrazing and de-vegetation pressures that contribute to rangelands degradation and conflicts.

(iv) Encouraging and supporting establishment of livestock cooperatives to facilitate marketing and value addition to livestock products and promoting healthy range-livestock management practices.

2.3.5.4 The key stakeholders, notably those living within or in the vicinity of the protected rangelands, are better aware of the opportunities, restrictions and obligations.

(i) Undertake stakeholders mapping and consultations to assess the communication needs for each of the rangelands or a group of rangelands that are nearby and similar.

(ii) Conceiving and implementing a stakeholders awareness and education program including, among others, preparation of awareness materials on the constraints to productivity of rangelands, the imperative of sustainable management, the significance of their 'protected forests status' assigned under forest law, and the opportunities for realizing the full potential of rangelands through traditional uses and emerging new opportunities, for example in the tourism and carbon markets.

(iii) Establishing mutually beneficial collaboration with other relevant organizations such as Arid Zone Research Institute, for pooling support and resources to promote research in the services of rangelands and the communities dependent on them.

(iv) Identify and undertake feasibly assessments of potential rangeland areas to be set aside for biodiversity conservation and assigning them an appropriate management category from amongst the IUCN protected areas category system as measure of additional protection and recognition of their values.

2.3.5.5 National and international investments are attracted for tapping into the significant potential of the Sindh's rangelands for enhanced livestock production, nature-based tourism and recreation.

(i) Harnessing opportunities offered by the global policy and developments such as, UN Convention on Combating Desertification, Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement on Climate Change through commissioning of a consultancy to scope out the potential and develop funding proposals.

(ii) Organizing one or more conferences of potential local investors in the economic opportunities offered by rangelands.

(iii) Opportunities to enhance Carbon pool in rangelands, explored through private sector financing / Public Private Partnership

2.3.5.6 *The rangeland of Sindh being the largest ecosystem covering 1129,247 acres requires specific attention to manage it scientifically and properly.*

(i) A separate wing headed by CCF (BS-20) needs to be established for specific management of rangeland resources.

(ii) An integrated approach shall be adopted by taking on board the agriculture Research & Extension, Livestock and Rural Development Departments.

2.3.6 Demarcation and re-notification of state forest lands: The boundaries of riverine forests, irrigated plantations, mangroves and rangelands are geo-referenced and re-notified to ward off the issues of illegal allotments and landownership conflicts.

2.3.6.1 The process of re-demarcating and geo-referencing the forest boundaries through Surveyor General of Pakistan, demarcating them on the ground, and prominently marking the boundaries by permanently fixed boundary pillars and establishment of inspection paths all along the forest boundaries are accomplished.

(i) Undertake geo-referenced boundary demarcation of state forestlands (riverine forests, irrigated plantations, mangroves and rangelands) through Surveyor General of Pakistan.

(ii) Prepare GIS based maps of state forestlands.

2.3.6.2 Notifying afresh the newly geo-referenced boundaries for both the government record and for public information.

(i) Based on re-demarcation, get the existing forest notification updated and reissued by the relevant authorities.

2.3.7 Social Forestry (Private, Community and Municipal Lands): Social forestry extends to more of the public, community, private and urban lands, either as a single dominant use or in combination with other land-uses, increasing the forest/tree cover in Sindh and benefiting more of the rural and urban populace. The social forestry set up will be extended to Tehsil / Taluka levels. Allocation of separate budget to social forestry to develop nurseries to take care of all Sindh government plantation requirements.

2.3.7.1 Baseline of existing tree resources on farm, community, private, public and urban lands is established.

(i) Undertaking a province-wide inventory of forests and trees on public, private and municipal lands outside the designated forest lands under the management of the Forest Department.

(ii) Publishing the survey report as the baseline on status of social forestry in Sindh.

2.3.7.2 The tree cover on community, public and private lands is expanded by 20% compared to the baseline over the next 5 years.

(i) Conceive social forestry programmes for outreaching and expansion of tree cover on community, public and private lands.

(ii) Providing tailored advice to municipalities for improving enhancing tree cover within urban areas;

(iii) Creating 'urban lungs' for each of the major cities of Sindh by establishing forests on extensive chunks of land that the respective municipality or government may provide or that may be secured through a dedicated fund capitalized with receipts from special taxes and offsets that the municipalities may raise.

2.3.7.3 The target groups are made better aware of opportunities and benefits associated with social forestry, especially in provision of ecosystem services and climate change.

(i) Develop and implement communication and awareness strategy for reaching out to masses through various communication channels.

(ii) Publishing extension material for reaching out to the stakeholders through the most effective means.

(iii) Using the periodic tree plantation campaigns as an opportunity for creating greater public awareness on tree planting.

(iv) Harnessing the opportunities of any local fair and exhibition to profile the work and benefits of social forestry;

(v) Promoting social forestry through presentations and talks in conferences in panel discussions on popular TV channels;

(vi) Engaging and mobilizing key opinion makers to communicate the social forestry knowledge and messages.

(vii) Organizing periodic briefings for the policymakers and the Standing Committees on Environment on broader imperative of sustainable forest management. Provincial Standing Committee on Forests shall be constituted.

(viii) Host field visits of political leadership to enhance their engagement and support for sustainable forest management.

(ix) Initiating and institutionalizing publication of an annual report of the Forest Department, capturing its achievements and challenges in relation to the approved Forest Policy.

2.3.7.4 The quality of existing designated parks and spaces for public amenity in urban areas is enhanced and new green spaces are set up in and around major cities of Sindh in collaboration with local government.

(i) Scoping out potential for establishing collaboration with civic bodies in different cities and towns for development and expansion of green spaces in and around cities. In doing so:
(a) avoid monoculture;
(b) promote indigenous tree species;
(c) protect old trees of cultural and historic significance,
(d) cater to the communities' needs such as for shade
(e) limited scale planting of local fruit trees
(f) keep in view the traffic needs
(g) physical obstruction, visibility, glare at night,
(h) promote soft natural spaces in preference to hard brick-and mortar built recreation facilities, and consider other such factors as to optimize the benefits of urban forestry for the people.

2.3.7.5 Linkages would be created to enhance tree planting on farmlands for carbon sequestration under instant private financing system.

2.3.8 Forestry Research and Education: Scientific research and education in forestry, non-timber forestry produce and wildlife is promoted for pragmatic conservation, planning, capacity building of forestry establishment and generating career opportunities for graduating students and researchers.

2.3.8.1 An applied research program is formulated, focused on responding to the forest planting partners and community needs and interests.

(i) Identify social forestry research and development needs in consultation with the stakeholders to prioritize social forestry R&D agenda. To this end, assessing internal research capacities within the Forest Department.

(ii) Undertaking applied research studies on the felt-needs of the farmers, namely, finding new tree crops, producing innovative value-added products; and accessing new markets that are more beneficial than the current options.

(iii) Where feasible, establish research collaboration with Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar, forestry research organizations in Sindh and other provinces, trade associations, not-for-profit organizations and with local universities.

2.3.8.2 Forestry research and education is promoted and strengthened at various levels in collaboration with academia and research institutions.

(i) Forestry Research & Education Directorate is further expanded and upgraded as Directorate General (BS-20) level for undertaking applied research and imparting latest knowledge to forestry professionals and general public.

(ii) Strengthen forestry education & trainings at Forest School Miani by up gradation of the school to impart forestry courses pre-service and in-service promotion courses for all field cadres / tiers as well as ministerial staff.

(iii) SBBUVAS, Sakrand has initiated B.S. Forestry, Range management and B.S. Wildlife Degree courses in collaboration with Forest & Wildlife Department which will be fully supported / facilitated.

2.3.9 Institutional Strengthening: The network of field offices of forestry department is established, where needed rehabilitated, reformed, strengthened, and supported for effective implementation of the Forest Policy.

2.3.9.1 The capacity of the Sindh Forest & Wildlife Administrative Department is strengthened for its role of coordinating, overseeing and supporting the policy implementation, to improve working conditions (offices, mobility, and accommodation for all staff tiers) and career path for officers and administrative staff.

(i) Resourcing Administrative Department with a core of 2-3 mid-level and senior level competent professionals and thus improving its in-house capacity for quality and objective decision making.

(ii) Reviewing and adapting the current delegation of administrative authority and its exercise for merit-based decision making.

(iii) Developing and instituting Standard Operating Procedures for encouraging compliance with the approved laws and regulations, free from any political or other undue considerations.

(iv) Exploring, firming up and resourcing the institutional option for creating new Urban Forestry Management Wing, Research, Education & NTFP Wing and Rangeland Wing for addressing the growing needs and opportunities in urban forestry, Rangeland Management and Research & Education.

(v) Improve working conditions such as offices, mobility, accommodations for all staff tiers and career path for officers and administrative staff.

2.3.9.2. A robust mechanism for steering, forest monitoring and assessing policy performance, reporting, communication and course correction is introduced for accountable functioning of the department and its attached departments, using modern tools and techniques (such as GIS) as best as possible.

(i) Notifying a Monitoring & Evaluation Committee headed by Secretary Forest & Wildlife Department with all the Chief Conservators of Forests and any other officials as its members.

(ii) Constitute a Committee/Working Group for reviewing the current capacities, mechanisms, tools and for data collection, analysis and reporting and identifying the needs for additional capacities, tools and measures.

(iii) Operationalize Provincial Forest Monitoring System by adapting modern scientific tools and protocols, and developing new ones as needed, and employing these tools (MPR, MIS, GIS, others) for necessary data collection, analysis and monitoring.

(iv) Producing and publishing regular periodic monitoring and assessment reports for internal review and discussion and sharing the information with the public at large.

(v) Establish and operationalize forest carbon registry to maintain the data pertaining to carbon trade within and out of the province.

(vi) Annual Administration Report covering all development, non-development activities / interventions are regularly prepared as an evidence / performance indicator.

(vii) Organize independent external reviews of forest policy at the end of its first tenure.

2.3.9.3 Technical and management capacity of forest officials is strengthened.

(i) Resourcing the additional needs for human resources and equipment including mobility in the field for an effective implementation of this policy.

(ii) Strengthening of GIS capacities of the department to produce maps of all the designated Reserved Forests and Protected Forests (including Rangelands) under the management of the Forest Department periodically.

(iii) Organizing regular on the job-training and refresher courses for all the formations of Sindh Forest Department in various aspects of sustainable forest management as identified through capacity needs assessment.

(iv) Expanding the sericulture, apiculture and Non Timber Forest Products Management activities, back into a robust applied research program that addresses practical needs of Sindh's forestry. By way of example, such issues may include diversifying species and products base demanded by farmers, growing and maintaining forests in the face of reduced fresh water flows in Indus delta, sustaining mangroves under threat from excessive pollution, productivity and management of rangelands, and others.

(v) Facilitating the effective administration and management, the heavy Forest Divisions shall be restructured and heavy ranges shall be upgraded and re-designated as Sub-Division. Moreover, the posts of Sub-DFOs (BS-17) shall be increased by upgrading the posts of RFO (BS-16) or by creating new posts.

(vi) Introducing performance incentives/recognitions for encouraging healthy competition among the officials at all levels.

2.3.9.4 *Where required, exiting laws, rules and regulations are reviewed and modified to create an enabling environment to effectively implement this policy and its targets.*

(i) Identifying the needs for amendments in existing laws and rules by taking into account the policy objectives and targets.

(ii) Drafting and carrying through necessary amendments in existing laws or enacting new legislation as may be needed.

(iii) Ensuring support of appropriate scale police force available with the department to enforce and implement the policy with following features:

Forest Personnel Designation	Police assistance level
Chief Conservator of Forests	Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP) 01 for Coordination alongwith staff.
Conservator of Forests (territorial) 7 Circles/Civil Division level	Inspector of Police 07 positions one each at Civil Divisions of Larkana, Sukkur, S. Benazirabad, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas and Karachi alongwith ancillary Constabulary for coordination with forestry field formations
Divisional Forest officers (afforestation) 17 Forest Divisions at District level.	Assistant Sub Inspector of Police (ASI) 17 with 04 constables to each ASI for field activities to assist forest officials

(iv) For effective protection and maintenance of stocked areas "Negahban" concept from SFM and Mangroves projects will be adopted.

2.3.10 National and Global Concerns and Opportunities: The management of forestry resources is aligned with national and global policies related to forestry, biodiversity and climate change such as SDGs, Aichi Biodiversity Targets, Paris Climate Agreement (2015), and other multilateral environmental agreements to which Pakistan is a signatory

2.3.10.1 *The policy and actions are designed to make consistent with national priorities and global policies and agreements to which Pakistan is a signatory.*

(i) Knowledge, skills and capacity of all tiers of forest administration are enhanced.

(ii) The leadership initiatives taken by the officers in attending the targets are documented and effectively disseminated nationally and internationally.

2.4 Policy Scope and Benefits

The Sindh Sustainable Forest Management Policy, 2019 amended 2023 covers main domains of Forestry Department and its scope extends to entire province. The policy objectives are consistent with national priorities and encompasses the obligations under international conventions and agreements. The policy is predominantly premised on enhancing the benefits of forestry for all stakeholders in the province, notably forest communities, private landowners and forestry related enterprises.

The policy adds support to urban forestry as an explicit part of the mandate of the Social Forestry Department. The department will be an enabler and supporter to forge collaborative mechanisms with municipal authorities and other government agencies. The urban population, municipal and port authorities, and the businesses situated along coastline are specifically focused under this policy.

2.5 Policy Period and Effective Date

This policy has been developed with a long-term perspective, shall be commencing from the date of its approval by Government of Sindh and shall be valid till 2035.

The objectives are to be reviewed bi-annually and will be pursued through SMART strategies i.e. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound.

3. Implementation Mechanism

3.1 Strategies

The policy suggests target-specific strategies which are indicative and may change and evolve during implementation after approval of competent authority and the underlying key concepts and considerations will remain applicable all along, unless amended by the competent forum.

3.1.1. Sindh government has promulgated a Public Private Partnership (PPP) law, where in private investors and experts are allowed to enter into partnership with government and create value for it and for government. With same spirit this policy explores the partnerships with private sector on local levels, involving communities where needed

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The policy implementation envisages multi-stakeholder engagement and support from policymakers, civil society, private sector and the different tiers of Forestry Department.

3.3 The Policy Makers

The Minister for Forests has the privilege to oversee the policy implementation on behalf of the Government of Sindh.

3.4 *The Forestry Administration*

The forestry administration comprises of Administrative Secretary being head of Administrative Department, Chief Conservators of Forests, the heads of Forestry Formations / Wings with various administrative tiers upto beat incharge, Forest Guards.

A. *The Administrative Department has the responsibility to:*

a) Provide required administrative support and to facilitate access to funds and capacity building opportunities, essentially required for implementation of policy strategies and actions.

b) Oversee, coordinate and regularly evaluate implementation of policy strategies and actions by the respective forestry wings & formations.

c) Endeavour to gain required socio political will to support policy implementation.

d) Ensure merit-based professional and operational decisions in the larger public interest.

e) Help in mobilizing the support of other administrative departments of the government as and when required for implementation of the policy.

B. *The Chief Conservators of Forests, being heads of various Forestry Formations have the lead role in implementing the policy in their respective jurisdictions, as under:*

a) Act as per manual and would be chief technical advisor to government for their respective regions

b) Act as a bridge between the Administrative Department and the lower field formations.

c) Ensure provision of required administrative and professional support to the field formations in decision-making and implementation of policy actions.

d) Formulate budget and project proposals to secure the required funding for implementation of the policy.

e) Oversee and regularly collect, analyze and report the progress of policy implementation to the administrative department.

f) Ensure providing management tools and resources and accountability of the field formations.

4. Endowment Fund

There shall be an Endowment Fund of Forest Department mainly built from the benefits arisen from the Carbon trading_and other PPP mode benefit sharing projects. The fund shall be utilized for effective implantation of policy targets and undertaking the diversified interventions viz, capacity building, assets building and maintenance, mobility of field formation, infrastructure development, Forest Protection and Sustainable Management, welfare of forestry personnel and other unforeseen needs.

5. Carbon Registry

Carbon Registry is established to look after the data pertaining to carbon trade within and out of the province. A detailed plan of operating Carbon Registry will be developed with the coordination of all stakeholders to enhance the revenue base of government.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 *The monitoring and evaluation shall take place at two levels:*

i. **Overall oversight**, progress review and evaluation would be carried out by the Administrative Department at the government level.

ii. **Operational level** monitoring would be carried out under the leadership of respective Chief Conservators of Forests. The respective Chief Conservators of Forests shall be responsible for collection of data from field as per the suggested tools and monitoring indicators.

iii. Satellite based monitoring of Forest Development Agreements (FDAs) and Forest Protection Agreements (FPAs)

6.2 *The Administrative Department may constitute a committee of professional foresters and its secretarial staff to support. The indicative terms of reference of the Committee are as follows:*

a) Preparation and updating of necessary tools for monitoring and creating a list of indicators for tracking the progress.

b) Provide necessary advice on policy implementation by different wings of the Forest Department and other stakeholders, and advise course of actions & corrective measures;

c) Support in periodic evaluation of policy progress and impacts.

d) Provide support in assessing needs for financial, legal and administrative reforms as may be required for effective implementation of the Policy;

e) Support in preparation of progress briefings for policymaker and provincial assembly Standing Committee on Environment and on Forests.

f) Identify potential opportunities to forest conservation objectives, based on international best practices and policy frameworks.

7. **Policy Review**

A comprehensive policy mid-term review is suggested to be undertaken after 5 years to assess policy achievements in terms of its objectives and targets and the challenges faced during implementation and suggest the remedial measures.

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Karachi: Printed at the Sindh Government Press
18-05-2023