

# Socio-Economic Report

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# SOCIO-ECONOMIC VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mountain View Science and Tech Park is a generalist, mix-use Science and Tech Park located in Mariabad town, Quetta. Total project area is ~34,000 sq ft. (0.78 acres) comprising of commercial and corporate components.

The project was initially constructed at a cost of PKR 280 million and includes 64 rooms with average size of 300 sq. ft. (with possibility to augment to 80 rooms). There are 2 floors (ground and first floor).

The proposed Park shall consist of offices, share facilities, amenity facilities, parking and other supportive structures.

Share facilities shall potentially consist of meeting rooms, auditorium, business center, test lab and storage areas.

## PROJECT AREA ASSESSMENT: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Socio-economic environment of the project area was studied in detail for developing the baseline information about the affected people of the project. Socio-economic survey of the settlements around the project area was carried out by team of experts. The respondents were selected by using the Random Sampling technique and data was collected through interviews.

- **Population:** Mariabad is one of the densest areas of Quetta, located near the Pakistan air force base, with nearly 600,000 residents, predominantly ethnic Hazaras who belong to the Shia sect.  
The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), an independent organisation which monitors the human rights situation in Pakistan, noted in its 2021 annual report that after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, a 'significant number' of Hazara refugees took 'temporary shelter' in Hazara Town and Mariabad. The 2 districts of Hazara Town and Mariabad, home to the Hazara community, are connected via Spini Road – a distance of 11.6 kilometres.
- **Geographical Context:** Located to the east of Quetta, Mariabad is surrounded by rugged mountains on two sides, an army cantonment, and connected to the main city, creating a somewhat isolated but well-defined community area.
- **Living Conditions:** Mariabad is one of the most advanced and organized localities in Balochistan in terms of education levels, administrative mechanisms, and cleanliness. There is a rising trend in the society to change their traditional socioeconomic pattern of life. Print and electronic media are playing key role in bringing tangible change in the old pattern of life.
- **Income group:** Hazaras are generally wealthier. The people of project area belong to higher middle-income and middle-income socio-economic class.
- **High Literacy Rate:** The Hazara community has a relatively high literacy rate compared to other communities in Balochistan, with a strong emphasis on both primary and secondary education.
- **Higher Education:** Many young Hazaras pursue higher education within Pakistan and abroad notably Australia, seeking scholarships and opportunities in fields such as engineering, social sciences, armed forces and medicine. Despite the emphasis on education, challenges include limited access to higher education institutions and a need for more educational resources and facilities. Discriminatory attitudes in educational institutes are also a concern.

- **Cultural Heritage:** The Hazara community actively preserves its cultural heritage through festivals such as Nowruz (Persian New Year) and religious observances like Muharram processions. The community is extremely tribal, organised into tribes, sub-tribes, clans, towala (families descended from same Male ancestor).
- **Social Cohesion:** There is strong social cohesion and mutual support within the community, maintained through community centers and local organizations. The community often faces ethnic and religious discrimination, impacting their social and economic integration within Quetta.
- **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):** The Hazara community is engaged in running small businesses such as grocery stores, clothing shops, and electronics repair shops, contributing significantly to the local economy.
- **Skilled Trades:** Many Hazaras are involved in skilled trades such as carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work, and also participate in construction and manual labor sectors.
- **Public Sector Employment:** Hazaras have significant representation in government jobs, including education, healthcare, and administrative roles.
- **Service Industry:** The community also has a presence in the service industry, with businesses in taxi services, hospitality, and personal care services like barbershops and beauty salons.
- **Access to Healthcare:** Access to healthcare facilities in Mariabad is relatively better than in other parts of Quetta, with several clinics and healthcare providers within the community. Common urban health issues are present, including limited access to specialized medical care and the need for improved healthcare infrastructure.
- **Checkpoints and Security Measures:** The presence of military checkpoints and security measures due to the proximity to the army cantonment and the Hazara graveyard could be seen negatively by potential tenants of the STP. Potential tenants and employees of the STP might face inconvenience due to the stringent security checks, which could affect the park's attractiveness.
- **Archeologist And Historical Treasures:** The field surveys conducted in the project area indicates that there was neither land acquisition nor resettlement issue in the project area however the project is under dispute due to filling of CP No. 143/2024. Also, it was identified that there is a graveyard, of religious importance at forefront of facility.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

This sub-section analyzes two potential uses for the facility:

### 1. Conversion to Science and Technology Park (STP):

#### Socio-Economic Benefits:

- Job Creation:
  - Technology Sector Growth: Presently science and tech companies in Balochistan are mainly centered in Quetta and are operating in rented buildings. Availability of space is insufficient considering rapid growth of the industry in the region and nationwide. There are a number of incubated companies as well as startups in Quetta (approximately more than 70) that have grown in size and revenue from early-stage business to growth stage business. These companies present demand to move to specialized space offered at the STP Park for further future extension. Establishing an STP would attract technology companies and startups, creating approximately 500 to 1000 direct jobs in various technology fields such as Information Technology Enabled Services (ITeS), mobile development, e-commerce, and FinTech. This estimate is also based on similar projects in other regions where technology parks have been successfully implemented.

- Indirect Employment: The presence of an STP would also generate indirect employment opportunities in supporting sectors such as food services and maintenance, potentially adding another 10-50 jobs to the local economy.
- Skill Development:
  - Partnership with Educational Institutions: The STP could partner with local universities and technical institutes to offer skill development programs. Courses could include coding languages (e.g., Python, Java, JavaScript), network security, and data protection.
  - Training Programs: Offering specialized training programs such as ethical hacking, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), social media marketing, and content creation. It is anticipated that these programs could train up to 500 individuals annually, equipping them with the skills needed for the growing tech sector.
- Innovation Hub:
  - Fostering Innovation and Entrepreneurship: By providing mentorship, funding, and workspace for early-stage tech startups, the STP would foster an environment conducive to innovation. This could include affordable and flexible workspaces, technology conferences, and workshops, attracting talented individuals and potentially leading to significant technology advancements.
  - Economic Impact: Similar STPs have been shown to contribute significantly to the local economy. For example, the Arfa Software Technology Park in Lahore has generated over PKR 10 billion in economic activity since its inception. A similar impact can be expected for Quetta, potentially generating significant revenue and attracting further investment.

## Challenges

- Location: Proximity to residential area and Hazara Graveyard may raise concerns about security and disruption to the Park as well as local community, particularly during religious processions like Ashura. Careful planning, including enhanced security measures and community engagement, will be required to address these concerns.
- Funding: Attracting private sector investment under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model might be challenging due to investor perceptions of security risks. However, government incentives and guarantees could mitigate these risks and attract investors.

## 2. Resumption of Residential School/Orphanage:

### Social Benefits:

- Improving Literacy Rates: Resuming the original project would provide educational and training opportunities for orphans and students in Mariabad, contributing to improved literacy rates. The facility could accommodate up to 300 students, providing them with quality education.
- Skilled Workforce Development: The residential school / orphanage could offer vocational training programs in trades such as carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work, helping develop a skilled workforce that can contribute to the local economy.

### Limited Economic Impact:

- Economic Contribution: While socially beneficial, a residential school / orphanage or training center would likely have a smaller overall economic impact compared to an STP. It would not directly create a hub for tech businesses and associated economic activity.
- Sustainability Concerns: The facility's long-term sustainability could be a challenge given the historical context of lack of funds and political influences that have hindered its functionality since its completion in 2017.

#### Recommendation:

Considering the socio-economic benefits, sustainability and potential for long-term growth, converting the facility into a Science and Technology Park offers a more impactful use of the state-of-the-art infrastructure. The STP would not only create significant employment opportunities and foster innovation but also drive substantial economic growth in the region. However, it is essential to address the challenges related to security and investment by implementing robust planning and community engagement strategies.

The resumption of the residential school/orphanage, while socially valuable, would provide limited economic benefits and face ongoing sustainability challenges.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The objective of this plan is to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Mariabad community through targeted initiatives in education, healthcare, employment, and social cohesion.

### 1. Educational Initiatives:

**STEM Focus:** Partner with local schools to establish a STEM pipeline program. Connect local community students with STEM professionals working at STP companies. This provides career guidance and exposes students to potential future employers. Partner with local universities to establish STEM education programs tailored for the community. Create coding boot camps, robotics workshops, and science clubs.

**Online Resources:** Negotiate access to online STEM learning platforms and digital libraries for students in the community. This provides affordable access to quality educational resources.

### 2. Healthcare Improvement:

**Telemedicine:** Implement telemedicine services to provide access to specialized medical consultations and treatments from leading healthcare providers outside Quetta. Establish telehealth kiosks equipped with basic diagnostic tools and internet connectivity. Train community health workers to operate these kiosks, facilitating remote consultations with doctors for common ailments.

### 3. Economic Empowerment:

**Tech Incubator:** Create a tech incubator within the STP specifically focused on nurturing startups founded by community residents. Offer subsidized rent, mentorship, and access to prototyping facilities. This fosters local innovation and job creation within the tech sector.

**Quotas and Incentives:** Implement quotas for community-based startups and companies in its tenant selection process. Offer competitive tax breaks and other incentives to attract tech businesses from community, further stimulating the local economy.

**Skills Development Workshops:** Conduct regular workshops within community focused on in-demand tech skills like coding, data analysis, and digital marketing. Partner with STP companies to ensure training aligns with current industry needs.

### 4. Social Cohesion and Cultural Preservation:

**Cultural Center:** Develop a cultural center within the STP to host events, exhibitions, and festivals that celebrate community heritage and foster social cohesion.

**Community Outreach Programs:** Organize tech expos, hackathons, and coding competitions within community. These events showcase the possibilities of STEM careers and foster a culture of innovation within the community.

## SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

This strategy is aimed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Park and its positive impact on the community.

### 1. Environmental Sustainability:

**LEED Lite Certification:** Pursue a streamlined version of LEED certification, focusing on cost-effective measures like water-efficient fixtures and natural lighting. This balances environmental benefits with resource limitations.

**Solar + Battery Storage:** Implement a hybrid solar power system with battery storage to power the STP during peak hours and offset grid dependence. Explore grants and tax incentives for renewable energy adoption.

**Waste Management as a Revenue Stream:** Partner with local waste management companies to establish a recycling program for e-waste generated by STP companies. This promotes environmental responsibility and generates additional income.

### 2. Economic Sustainability:

**Targeted Partnerships:** Collaborate with neighboring commercial units for joint infrastructure projects like fiber optic networks. Utilize PPP mode for offering incentives such as tax breaks and fast-track regulatory approvals for companies setting up in the STP.

**Smart Revenue Diversification:** Beyond leasing office space, explore co-working arrangements, innovation cafes, and tech-focused events to attract diverse tenants and generate additional income streams.

**Graduate Startup Program:** Partner with universities to create a graduate startup program within the Tech Incubator. Offer recent graduates seed funding, mentorship, and co-working space to launch tech ventures, creating a pipeline of homegrown talent.

### 3. Social Sustainability:

**Community Advisory Board:** Establish a board comprised of local residents, educators, and business leaders. This board advises on STP development plans, ensuring the community's voice is heard.

**Skilled Workforce Development:** Collaborate with vocational schools to develop targeted training programs that equip residents for in-demand tech jobs.

**Tech Upliftment Initiative:** Offer discounted co-working space, internet access, and mentorship to community-based social enterprises. This empowers them to leverage technology for community development initiatives.

### 4. Regulatory Compliance:

**Regular Audits:** Conduct annual sustainability audits that not only address environmental and social compliance but also assess the STP's economic impact on the community (job creation, local business development).

**Transparency and Reporting:** Maintain transparent operations with regular public reports on the STP's environmental and social performance. Develop a data-driven narrative showcasing the STP's positive social and environmental impact alongside its economic achievements.

### 5. Long-Term Planning:

**Sustainability Goals:** Set short-term and long-term sustainability goals aligned with evolving national and international standards, while remaining flexible to adapt to emerging technologies and community needs.

**Adaptive Management:** Regularly engage with residents, businesses, government agencies, and universities through workshops and surveys. This fosters continuous improvement and ensures the STP remains responsive to changing circumstances.