

## Pakistan to scrap over 10,000 poverty alleviation schemes

The Pakistani government is to scrap over 10,000 community-based poverty reduction and employment generation schemes launched by the previous regime.

The bulk of these are under the Rs.25 billion Khushal Pakistan Fund (KPF) established as a limited company in the public-private partnership mode in September 2005 to finance projects to provide clean drinking water and sanitation, build district link roads and infrastructure and improve health and education facilities.

Quoting a finance ministry official, Dawn said Tuesday that a meeting to discuss the fund's future was held on July 3 and to review the legal, administrative and financial ramifications of its closure.

'We have asked the KPF to provide details of schemes before the next meeting,' the official said.

The KPF has already spent Rs.4 billion on various projects in Punjab, Sindh and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), while about 7,500 small infrastructure schemes are nearing completion in Balochistan.

The Balochistan schemes, meant to benefit about a million people, were launched in March 2006 and every district was provided Rs.100 million, the official said.

In September 2007, the KPF initiated 2,500 schemes through the Rural Support Programmes in the NWFP and Sindh and was to release Rs.2 billion for this.

The official said that more than 1,000 schemes had been launched in Sindh after the February general elections, mostly in constituencies of legislators of the Pakistan Peoples Party that rules the province.

The KPF was ready to launch 6,000 schemes in Punjab for which it had allocated Rs.15 billion.

The exchequer might lose Rs.342.286 million if the ongoing schemes were not completed through rural support organisations, the finance ministry official said. Partner organisations might sue the KPF for breach of contracts, he added.

'Under the terms of reference, 30 percent of the operational cost will have to be reimbursed to partner organisations even if the schemes are not initiated. It might result in a loss of Rs.51.5 million,' Dawn said.

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