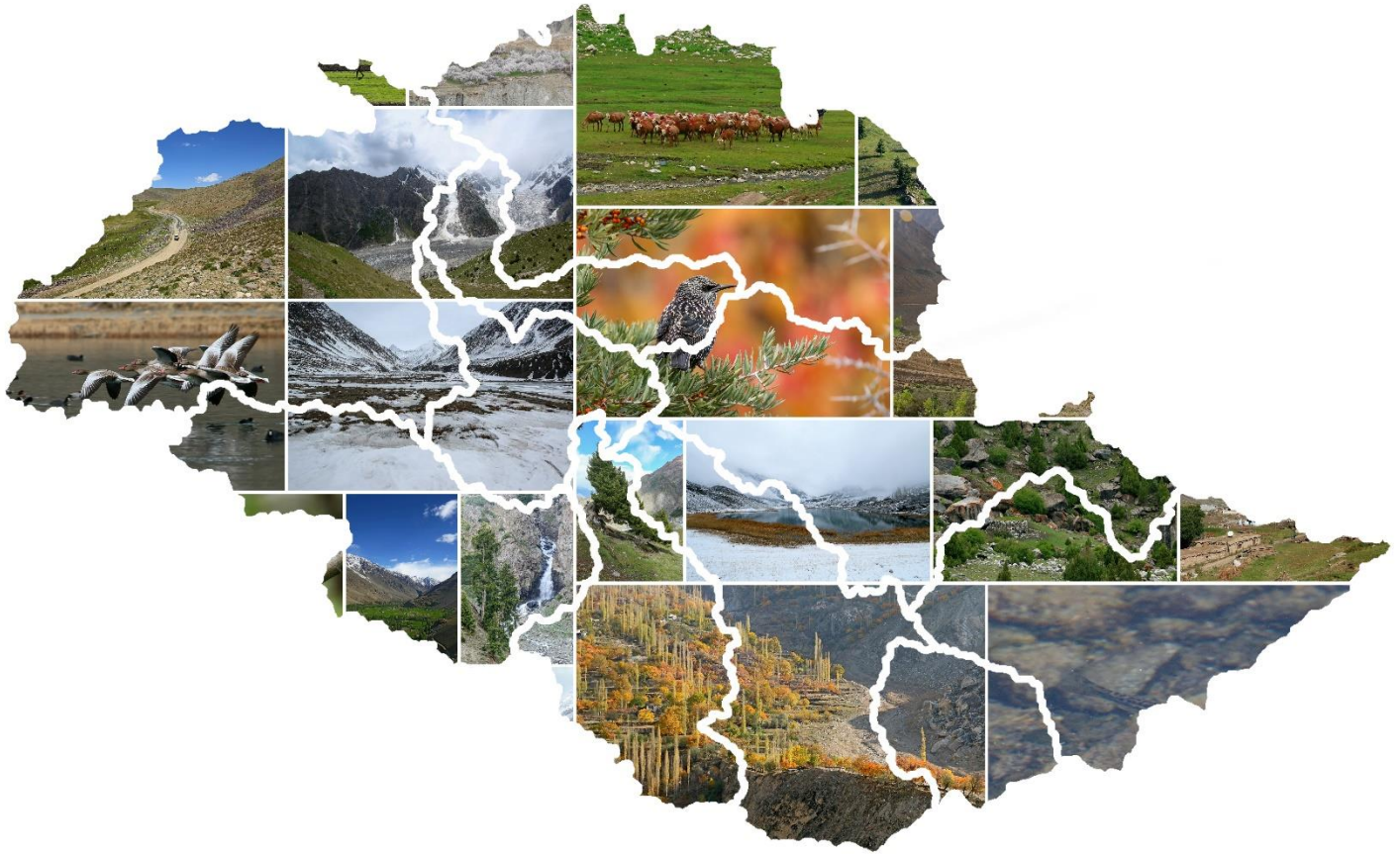




Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency (GB-EPA)



Gilgit-Baltistan

Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

2023

Gilgit-Baltistan Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan - 2023

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Resource Persons:
Shehzad Hasan Shigri (Director)
Khadim Hussain (Deputy Director)

Available from:
Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency (GB-EPA)
Government of Gilgit-Baltistan
website: <http://www.gbepa.gog.pk/>

Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency
Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam, Khomer, Gilgit
Phone No. 05811-920676, 920679; Fax No. 05811-922016

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species (Ramsar Convention)
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
G-B	Gilgit-Baltistan
GIS	Geographic Information System
GLOFs	Glacial Lake Outburst Floods
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDE	National Designated Entity
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
RS	Remote Sensing
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
ESCA	Environmentally Sensitive and Critical Areas

Preface

Pakistan is considered one of the most vulnerable countries to changing climatic patterns due to its diverse geographic setting and demographics. Being ecologically fragile and having a very diverse topography, Gilgit-Baltistan is no exception to this. The region hosts highest mountain peaks, extended glacial system, pristine valleys, and unique culture, all of which are being particularly hit hard.

Besides, its geo-political and geographical significance, the region is of ecological and economic importance due to its significance as a 'water tower'. The glacial melt feeds the extensive river system in Pakistan, providing river flows to millions downstream and as a lifeline to sustaining agriculture and livelihoods. Gilgit-Baltistan also abodes remarkably diverse and productive ecosystems, providing timber, and other ecological benefits and mountain products.

In addition to the impacts such as temperature rise, water scarcity, damage to agriculture production and degradation of ecosystems, some of the other unique impacts are already being felt in the form of glacial melt and the phenomenon of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs). The ongoing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) brings additional trade and commercialization challenges to the region.

Addressing the challenges of climate change, through prioritizing adaptation measures is a top political and administrative priority, as to safeguard the unique natural assets and protect the life and livelihoods of millions in Gilgit-Baltistan. The National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) of Pakistan (2012), updated NCCP (2021), the Framework for Implementation on National Climate Change Policy (2014-2030) provide sufficient policy provision for initiating priority adaptation actions in the region.

The Gilgit-Baltistan Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan is developed under the guidance of the Gilgit-Baltistan Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (Revised) and with the support of Scaling-up of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods Risk Reduction in Northern Pakistan' (GLOF-II) Project, thorough a consultation process. This adaptation action plan prioritizes thematic areas to initiate climate adaptation actions and elaborates various strategic objectives. It is expected that implementation of the action plan would help to reduce vulnerabilities and support adaptation efforts in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan for Gilgit-Baltistan

In the face of accelerating climate change impacts in Gilgit-Baltistan, it becomes imperative to formulate a plan to proactively address the challenges posed by changing climate, protect human and ecological well-being, and to build resilient and sustainable communities in vulnerable sectors; leading to a reduction of expected socio-economic losses.

This plan will serve to build a climate-resilient Gilgit-Baltistan through a comprehensive approach that integrates diplomacy, policy, adaptation projects, and knowledge management. This will not only address local climate vulnerabilities but also enhance the region's role in national and international climate discussions, ultimately contributing to global climate action.

The overarching objectives of Gilgit-Baltistan Adaptation Action Plan is to:

- Reduce the vulnerability of people, livelihoods, physical assets and natural systems to the adverse effects of climate change;
- Strengthen institutional and technical capacities for effective climate change adaptation;
- Integrate climate change adaptation into relevant policies, plans and associated processes; and
- Promote climate-related research, and knowledge dissemination to facilitate informed decision-making and advocacy.

The following 04 priority thematic areas and specific objectives are proposed for the adaptation action plan in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Thematic Area 1: Support to Strengthening of Pakistan's Climate Change Diplomatic Stance

Objective 1.1. To facilitate effective involvement from Gilgit-Baltistan in international climate change negotiations process, in-line with Pakistan's diplomatic priorities on climate change.

Strategic Actions:

- 1.1.1. Participate in preparatory meetings of Pakistani delegation, participating in UNFCCC negotiation process to highlight unique vulnerabilities of Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 1.1.2. Support alignment of Gilgit-Baltistan's climate change priority strategic actions with national priorities for effective projection in global climate change regime, by providing input to national position papers and support in preparation on 'sector specific' strategic paper specific to Gilgit- Baltistan.
- 1.1.3. Enhance engagement with other Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), as necessary, particularly, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UN Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD), Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar),

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and Convention for International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES).

Objective 1.2. To strengthen vertical institutional coordination for climate change adaptation actions.

Strategic Actions:

- 1.2.1. Strengthen engagement with Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination for participation in policy development/ review, adaptation planning and other institutional processes.
- 1.2.2. Enhance coordination with National Designated Entity (NDE) for climate change, i.e., Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination to effectively engage with reporting process to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as obligatory for Pakistan.
- 1.2.3. Enhance coordination with National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) for reducing risks and vulnerabilities, particularly those of the poor and marginalized groups, and by effectively responding to and recovering from all types of disaster events in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Thematic Area 2: Policy Interventions and Institutional Strengthening

Objective 2.1. **Develop planning for effective implementation of recommended policy interventions.**

- 2.1.1. Support Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination by participating in policy processes, including; development and periodic review of:
 - a. Pakistan's Updated National Climate Change Policy (2021),
 - b. Framework for Implementation of National Climate Change Policy (2014- 2030),
 - c. Pakistan's successive Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),
 - d. National Adaptation Plan (NAP), and
 - e. Development of other sectoral adaptation action plans.
- 2.1.2. Conduct periodic review of progress made with respect to suggested/ identified adaptation measures as defined under the Framework for Implementation of National Climate Change Policy (2014- 2030) for Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 2.1.3. Effectively engage with National Adaptation Planning process in Pakistan, as a mean for identifying medium and long-term adaptation needs; and implementing strategies and programs to address those needs for Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 2.1.4. Support implementation of 'Gender and Climate Action Plan' of Pakistan with integration of key considerations from Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 2.1.5. Strengthening of Environment and Strategic Assessment such as Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Initial Environmental Examinations (IEE) of all development projects for integration of adaptation concerns in Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 2.1.6. Support mainstreaming of climate change adaptation priorities in overall development planning in Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 2.1.7. Ensure effective involvement of youth, civil society, poor & marginalized social groups in overall strategic and policy planning in Gilgit-Baltistan by adopting 'whole-of-society approach'.
- 2.1.8. Periodic review and upgradation of Gilgit- Baltistan Adaptation Action Plan.

Objective 2.2. Institutional strengthening and improved coordination in Gilgit-Baltistan.**Strategic Actions:**

- 2.2.1. Strengthening of institutional setups in the relevant departments in Gilgit-Baltistan for policy formulation and technical support, on matters pertaining to climate change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).
- 2.2.2. Institutional strengthening of Gilgit-Baltistan Environmental Protection Agency (GB-EPA) for performing a lead role in climate change adaptation efforts.
- 2.2.3. Establish and further strengthening institutional coordination mechanism amongst various provincial departments for devising a holistic and coordinated strategic response to climate change by adopting 'whole-of-government approach', through establishment of Gilgit-Baltistan Climate Change Adaptation and DRR Committee.
- 2.2.4. Strengthen access to Climate Finance by enhancing institutional capacities, strengthening linkages and improved coordination.
- 2.2.5. Ensure provision of adequate human and financial resources for climate change adaptation action.
- 2.2.6. Strengthen environmental compliance and auditing, through strengthening of impact assessment, quality monitoring and compliance with environmental quality standards.
- 2.2.7. Initiate measures/ design and implement programs to strengthen the capacity of civil society, grass-root organizations, and communities for implementation of adaptation measures. Increase adaptive capacity and disaster risk reduction through participatory approaches.

Thematic Area 3: Design and Implement Adaptation Interventions

Objective 3.1. Design and implement adaptation interventions in Water Sector in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Strategic Actions:

- 3.1.1. Prepare Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) Strategy for Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 3.1.2. Develop and promote integrated water resource management approaches for domestic, agriculture, power, and industrial/commercial uses.
- 3.1.3. Design, test, introduce and replicate measures (including technological/ mechanical and knowledge-based approaches) for efficient and judicious use of water resources, for domestic, agricultural and industrial use, including:
 - a. Promote access to water by development, extension and rehabilitation of water distribution systems, including piping, water channels/ aqua ducts, and other measures as needed,
 - b. Introduce measures to reduce water wastage including, promotion of domestic/ traditional practices, technological options and deployment of fiscal measures (water pricing), with pro-poor fiscal measures,
 - c. Introduce and extend practices to encourage water recycling, i.e., 'wastewater treatment and re-use' through adopting cost-effective and sustainable biotechnological (bioremediation) and mechanical options (as feasible),
 - d. Encourage rainwater harvesting for domestic/ agricultural use and ground-water recharge (where feasible),
 - e. Where feasible, promote community water storage practices for domestic, agricultural and livestock use,
 - f. Introduce and extend measures for water resource conservation, including, pollution control and quality monitoring for promotion of safe and sustainable use of water,
 - g. Consider options for 'ground water recharge' (as and where feasible),
 - h. Design and implement measures for improved access to safe drinking water through better management, while integrating 'pro-poor' considerations,

- 3.1.4. Promote policy, institutional, legal, and social measures for improved access, judicious and equitable benefit sharing from water resources in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Objective 3.2. Design and implement adaptation interventions in Agriculture/ Horticulture, Livestock/ Rangelands and Fisheries Sectors in Gilgit- Baltistan.

Strategic Actions:

- 3.2.1. Prepare 'Integrated Climate-Resilient Agriculture, Horticulture, Livestock, Rangelands and Fisheries Development Strategies' for Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 3.2.2. Document, review, promote and up-scale traditional knowledge with respect to sustainable agriculture, including; agronomic practices, irrigation, storage and crop protection and sustainable harvesting.
- 3.2.3. Preserve, reintroduce/ promote local agricultural and local fruit varieties.
- 3.2.4. Shifting cropping patterns (calendar of agricultural and horticultural operations) towards climatically sensitive methods.
- 3.2.5. Encourage crop diversification towards high-value crops and fruits; and promotion of Agroforestry and mixed cropping (where feasible).
- 3.2.6. Introduction of climatically resilient crop varieties (drought and heat tolerant, salt resistant).
- 3.2.7. Promote integrated pest management, through sustainable use of pesticides, their gradual elimination and promotion of biological control of pests.
- 3.2.8. Promote and adopt measures to manage agricultural/ horticulture labor migration through measures to diversify livelihoods.
- 3.2.9. Promote sustainable rangeland management, through deploying 'community-based management' approaches.
- 3.2.10. Introduce and extend soil conservation & watershed management interventions to enhance productivity of rangelands and introduction of alternate fodder production systems.
- 3.2.11. Introduce programs/ initiatives for livestock breed improvement, preservation of local gene pool and improvement of livestock health.
- 3.2.12. Reduce external stressors on aquatic systems (pollution control) for protection of fish resources.

- 3.2.13. Identify and protect valuable areas for protection of fisheries stock in Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 3.2.14. Enforce monitoring, regulate fishing, and control illegal fishing practices.
- 3.2.15. Promote sustainable fish farming practices such as Total Allowable Catch (TAC), for reducing burden of natural stocks, ensuring food security and enhance livelihoods.

Objective 3.3. Design and implement adaptation interventions in Land use/ Forestry and other Ecosystems Sector in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Strategic Actions:

- 3.3.1. Conduct land use zoning to identify specific land-uses and facilitate integrated land-use planning and management in Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 3.3.2. Focus on mass afforestation/ reforestation for rehabilitation and expansion of natural forest ecosystems.
- 3.3.3. Promote watershed management for soil protection and ground water recharge (where feasible).
- 3.3.4. Initiate measures for introduction of 'natural capital accounting', for calculating stocks and flows of natural resources and services.
- 3.3.5. Strengthen forest inventory management and monitoring for protection and sustainable management of forest resources.
- 3.3.6. Enhance benefit from globally available instruments of Reducing Emissions for Deforestation & Forest Degradation and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD/ REDD+).
- 3.3.7. Enhance, extend and promote management of protected areas for biodiversity conservation/ wildlife habitats, ecosystem services, carbon stock development, sustainable tourism and enhance livelihoods.
- 3.3.8. Promote sustainable practices for harvesting of ecosystem products for fuelwood, timber and non-timber forest products (and other ecosystem services) for forest conservation, increased revenue and livelihood development.
- 3.3.9. Promote use of alternate energy sources (solar, mini & micro hydropower) as feasible for adaptation benefits linked to natural resource conservation, and other associated benefits, such as human health etc.
- 3.3.10. Empowering communities for participation in community-based forest management, better use of indigenous knowledge for forest management.

- 3.3.11. Promote urban greening including forestry interventions such as roof top greening to reduce urban heat island effect in cities such as Gilgit and Skardu and promote other associated benefits.
- 3.3.12. Promoting sustainable eco-tourism for promoting nature-based livelihoods in Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 3.3.13. Design, deploy and up-scale 'nature-based adaptation' to climate change, for benefits such as, biodiversity conservation, land resource conservation/ watershed management, disaster risk reduction and promotion of eco-system services.

Objective 3.4. Design and implement adaptation interventions in Disaster Sector in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Strategic Actions:

- 3.4.1. Conduct 'hazard and vulnerability zonation' of Gilgit-Baltistan region for risk identification and supporting enhanced risk mitigation and strengthening response measures.
- 3.4.2. Design and initiate (pilot) measures for financial and livelihood protection of vulnerable communities, such as cash flows, crop and infrastructure insurances, etc.
- 3.4.3. Make use of technological/ engineering and biological measures for disaster risk reduction, such as, riverbank reinforcements, soil & slope stabilization structures, measures for protection of residential and communication infrastructure, etc.
- 3.4.4. Strengthen early warning system for disaster risk reduction, addressing a range of disasters including floods, droughts, heat waves, GLOFs, pest attacks, pandemics etc., with a focus on 'science-based community driven' early warning systems.
- 3.4.5. Development of comprehensive plans (including institutional responsibilities) to safeguard human lives and protection of livestock, infrastructure, and ecological resources from disasters, particularly GLOFs.
- 3.4.6. Strengthen response, rescue operations considering climatically-induced disasters.
- 3.4.7. Develop and implement livelihoods rehabilitation programs (post disaster), where required.
- 3.4.8. Strengthen technological support for early warning systems in case of disasters such as floods and GLOFs.

- 3.4.9. Document, analyze/ interpret, strengthen and re-introduce traditional knowledge for disaster risk reduction and response.
- 3.4.10. Promote nature-based/ eco-based adaptation for disaster risk reduction in Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 3.4.11. Strengthen response and contingency plan/ measures for disaster risk reduction, particularly GLOFs and pandemics.

Objective 3.5. Design and implement Adaptation interventions in Buildings, Infrastructure and Urban Sector in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Strategic Actions:

- 3.5.1. Develop new (existing), revise and amend building codes and infrastructure by-laws/ codes for promoting climatically compatible and resilient building and infrastructure development.
- 3.5.2. Design and develop climatically smart, environmentally suitable and energy efficient buildings and other infrastructure/ introduce design and material standards.
- 3.5.3. Strengthen city, urban and land-use planning/ village land-use planning for improved disaster resilience, such as in case of GLOFs.
- 3.5.4. Initiate measures for upgradation of public buildings, schools, hospitals, power infrastructure (dams, transmission lines etc.) and communication infrastructure (road and communication network) in terms of safety and resilience.
- 3.5.5. Enforcement/ improved regulation of construction and development in highly prone areas to disasters, such as:
 - a. Riverbeds,
 - b. Unstable topographic location, and
 - c. Areas prone to GLOFs.
- 3.5.6. Document, review, promote and up-scale traditional knowledge with respect to infrastructure resilience, particularly rural housing, including:
 - a. Use of local/ ecologically friendly and climatically resilient construction material,
 - b. Promote hybrid (encompassing both structural and nature-based) solutions for infrastructure development.
- 3.5.7. Strengthen and extend measures for improvement of air quality (including indoor air quality) by:
 - a. Improvement of vehicular engines and fuel quality,
 - b. Air quality monitoring and law enforcement,

c. Introduction and promotion of efficient stoves/ cooking and provision of safe fuels for domestic use.

3.5.8. Initiate measure for greening of trade and development in region, by strengthening policy, institutional/ regulatory and other measures.

Objective 3.6. Design and implement adaptation interventions in Health & Sanitation Sector in Gilgit- Baltistan.

Strategic Actions:

- 3.6.1. Strengthen preparedness and institutional response to reduce morbidity and mortality of infectious diseases (vector, water, air and food-borne diseases) and malnutrition attributed to climate change.
- 3.6.2. Strengthen a surveillance system at appropriate levels to monitor risk factors/ behaviors, water and air quality, food safety, vectors, malnutrition and other sensitive diseases and risks.
- 3.6.3. Standard case management for reducing morbidity and preventing mortality due to vector-borne and control of pathogens,
- 3.6.4. Enhancement of epidemiological and entomological surveillance, particularly pandemics.
- 3.6.5. Develop and implement strategies to facilitate access to health care services for early detection and treatment of infections and manage outbreaks, preferably directing vulnerable population.
- 3.6.6. Develop and adopt guidelines for water storage and disposal, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas. Efficient enforcement mechanisms need to be adopted for keeping a check on water storage facilities/tanks, ponds, fountains etc., for diseases such as dengue & malaria, etc.
- 3.6.7. Regulating use of chemicals for fogging and fumigation to curtail their negative impacts.

Thematic Area 4: Strengthening Evidence, Informed Decision Making, Advocacy and Knowledge Management

Objective 4.1. Strengthen climate change research.

Strategic Actions:

- 4.1.1. Support scientific evidence with respect to climate change and disasters by strengthening science, analysis and interdisciplinary research, in priority areas such as;
 - a. Multi-hazard vulnerabilities and climate change/ disaster risk assessment, (e.g. preparation of glaciers and glacial lake inventories),
 - b. Climate change impact assessment in priority sectors and Environmentally Sensitive and Critical Areas (ESCA),
 - c. Vulnerability assessment/ coping capacity assessments/ hazard mapping,
 - d. Ecological/ natural resource baseline surveys/ resource assessment,
 - e. Social, demographic, topographical and geo-spatial database development,
- 4.1.2. Effective engagement with research institutions and academia to support generation of data and conduct the research on priority sectors in Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 4.1.3. Effective engagement with nodal (federal/ international) research institutions in sectors such as water, agriculture/ livestock, disasters, forests, etc, for defining science-based policy and adaptation actions for Gilgit-Baltistan.
- 4.1.4. Development and introduction of academic curricula for primary, secondary and tertiary education on environmental education/ climate change adaptation.

Objective 4.2. Strengthening informed decision making.

Strategic Actions:

- 4.2.1. Continuously advise Government of Gilgit-Baltistan about emerging environmental and climate change threats; and immediate adaptation priorities, through input and advise by 'Gilgit-Baltistan Climate Change Adaptation and DRR Committee'.

Objective 4.3. Awareness raising and advocacy.**Strategic Actions:**

- 4.3.1. Promote development of science & knowledge- based communication material, including, brochures, fact sheets, pamphlets web resources, etc., (as required), for:
 - a. Impacts of climate change on frequency & intensity of natural disasters,
 - b. Improve climate & disaster resilience in building/ infrastructure, water, agriculture, forestry/ natural resource, and health sectors,
 - c. Ensure participatory approaches in natural resource management to promote ecosystem-based climate adaptation and disaster resilience.
- 4.3.2. Design and undertake awareness raising activities on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, for:
 - a. Awareness raising activities for policy makers/ politicians, through targeted campaigns/ policy dialogue,
 - b. Awareness raising activities for public officials/ experts/ government functionaries,
 - c. Awareness raising activities for academia/ youth and school children,
 - d. Awareness raising activities for media (print, digital electronic and web-based),
 - e. Design and execute sensitization activities for communities.
- 4.3.3. Design and undertake specific awareness activities to showcase best adaptation approaches in priority sectors and promotion ecofriendly human behavior & practices.
- 4.3.4. Develop an integrated information system to manage temporal and spatial information on climate change and disaster risk reduction.
- 4.3.5. Modernization of climate change extension services through improved use of technological and communication tools, particularly in relation to climate change induced disasters, such as floods & GLOFs.
- 4.3.6. Effective involvement of media/ journalists to better communicate climate change to enhance public awareness.

Objective 4.4. Knowledge management.**Strategic Actions:**

- 4.4.1. Enhance documentation, ensure better management of climate change related information and disaster events, showcase best adaptation practices and resilience building approaches.
- 4.4.2. Promote use of scientific tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Remote Sensing (RS), telemetric, and other data based and technologically supported tools (as available) for supporting integration of climate change adaptation concerns in overall development planning.
- 4.4.3. Support translation of scientific research to define policy actions, development of projects/ programs, and risk reduction from climate change induced disasters, such as GLOFs.
- 4.4.4. Hold continuous 'cross-sectoral' strategic dialogues in Gilgit-Baltistan (i.e., agriculture, water, disasters, forestry/ land management & natural resources, wildlife & biodiversity, social sector, public health, etc.) for defining & highlighting adaptation priorities of the region.



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