

# Opportunities in Pakistan

## Infrastructure

Pakistan is a country of nearly 190 million people which is still grappling with basic infrastructure issues. Within the country, there are small areas of excellence and the country demonstrates an ever-growing appetite for technology and innovative services. The mass market is relatively low-tech and there are tremendous opportunities in infrastructure activities.

Most of the large infrastructure projects, e.g. hydel dams etc. are financed by multilateral agencies such as the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, International Finance Corporation etc. However, there are medium-sized road, health, construction projects etc. that can be developed by public/private partnerships (PPP). The Government is actively encouraging growth in PPP.

## Retail

Pakistan's high volume retail landscape is changing. A growing middle-class wants access to western goods. A number of western high street brands (e.g. Debenhams, Next, Monsoon, Accessorize) have successfully established operations here through franchises. Carrefour is already operating two stores. GSK is the leading pharmaceutical company in Pakistan, selling many of its products available at pharmacies worldwide. Hardware retail is another area that stands to gain market share in the face of competition from mainly single-shop wholesale setups.

## Services

Service area opportunities include education, where not only teaching aides but teacher-training programmes, technical education and school linkages/affiliations are in much demand. With 50% of the population under the age of 25, this is a huge opportunity area.

Traffic management, driver training & licensing and traffic laws enforcement are areas of latent demand which have a huge potential for foreign intervention. Like any large city in the developing world traffic congestion is an increasing problem with each passing day.

Engineering consultancy is a stable segment where consultancies already established in the market engage together on the majority of the projects, but there are opportunities for architectural, management and other consultancies to identify a niche locally.

## Healthcare

The Pakistan Government spends between 2-3% of GDP on health with the result that there are 0.6beds/1000 people (2010 est.). Health as a sector offers huge opportunities, from setting up diagnostic laboratories and hospitals to educational/research linkages with local medical schools. There is a thriving private sector in larger cities.

## ICT

The Telecoms sector is another area where there has been a huge amount of FDI, and 2003-2008 saw rapid growth. This is a prime example of a situation where the infrastructure (landlines) was not meeting demand. Mobile companies saw it as an opportunity, entered the market and now every strata of society carries a mobile phone. Pakistan now ranks amongst the top ten countries in the world in terms of mobile connections, with over 130 million mobile connections currently active in the market. Opportunities exist for value-added services, billing software, data services etc.

## Energy

Energy is another area where there are many opportunities, manifested in various ways such as through PPP for small and medium sized hydel, alternative energy scalable platforms, biogas, lead-acid batteries (which can be exported to regional markets as well), and energy conservation aids, e.g. energy saver lights, PVC windows, door frames, rubbers etc.

Mining also holds potential as current mining operations are basically dependent on dated techniques. Pakistan has large reserves of coal, copper, salt, gold, other precious metals and minerals etc. which require foreign expertise and investment. UKTI Pakistan can share their knowledge base on the sector.

## Defence and Security

Defence procurement is a huge area of opportunity. Pakistan has the 7th largest standing army, and supplying provisions and emergency supplies is a huge potential market for companies with relevant products.

Pakistan's security landscape is full of opportunities in terms of "Safe City" technology, detection equipment, security training etc.

## Other opportunities

In summary, opportunities in Pakistan do exist but require a hands-on approach to capitalise upon them. Pakistan ranks 128 in the World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business index" (2015), fourteen places higher than India.

Opportunity areas in sectors and sub-sectors exist and your UKTI Pakistan team member can help you identify the most relevant ones. The above list is by no means exclusive and other areas like financial services, petroleum refining, electricity generation, publishing, industrial chemicals, fertilisers, cement and FMCG offer opportunities of their own.

Source - UKTI

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