# Bangladesh: Rural ICT Connectivity Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Rural ICT Connectivity Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Number</td>
<td>44205-012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Status</td>
<td>Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Type / Modality of Assistance</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Funding / Amount</td>
<td>TA 7553-BAN: Rural ICT Connectivity Project Technical Assistance Special Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US$ 225,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Agendas</th>
<th>Inclusive economic growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drivers of Change</td>
<td>No gender elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector / Subsector</td>
<td>Information and communication technology - ICT industries and ICT-enabled services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Equity and Mainstreaming</td>
<td>No gender elements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

The Government of Bangladesh has developed the policy document with a single vision, 10 board objectives, 56 strategic themes and 306 action items to promote wide ICT use for national development. Three out of the ten objectives are related to infrastructure building to assist the rural population: (i) Ensure social equity, gender parity, equal opportunity and equitable participation in nation-building through access of ICTs for all, including persons with disability and special needs; (ii) Universal Access: Ensure connectivity to all as a public service obligation; and (iii) Support to ICT: Develop appropriate infrastructure including power, and regulatory framework for effective adoption and use of ICTs throughout the country.

Backbone fiber optic networks in Bangladesh are extensive and are already built by many mobile operators (mostly foreign owned), Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) operators, and the incumbent operator BTCL in Bangladesh. The fiber optic networks to major cities and districts are already in place. There are altogether 64 districts (zila) in Bangladesh, which are divided into sub-districts (Upazila, or UPZ), and each upazila further divided into unions (UP), and each UP into multiple villages. There are approximately 483 UPZs and 4500 UPs. Out of these, 59 districts and 284 UPZ already connected with fiber optic networks. Each UPZ covers an approximate average area of radius 10km and each UPZ on the average consists of 9 UPs.

There is an immediate requirement to connect 1,000 designated UPs and the setting up of Community E-Centers (CeCs) in these UPs to provide reliable and efficient high-speed connectivity in these areas, including schools, particularly elementary schools. For communications to rural areas CeCs in UPZ and schools, the "last mile" connectivity is currently not readily available and is a gap which needs to be filled.

Telecommunications connectivity to the CeCs in rural areas includes two portions: the backbone fiber optic links and the "last mile" connectivity to the targeted UPZ and schools locations. The backbone fiber optic is abundant, the "last mile" high speed and reliable connectivity is lacking. The technological options to deploy network connectivity in the "last mile" between the nearest telecom network nodes and the CeCs include: (i) Wireless: WIFI, WiMAX, Microwave; (ii) Satellite: VSAT; (iii) Mobile Networks: CDMA, LMDS, EDGE and 3G wireless, GPRS; and (iv) Fiber Optic Network.

Connecting the rural villages to the fiber optic backbone in turn connecting them to the region via the on-going SASEC Information Highway Project. ICT is vital to improve rural area productivity, solution sharing between local people and communities, providing access to practical information on small business accounting, weather trends and farming based practices. Timely access to market information via communications networks also helps farmers make astute decisions about what crops to plant and where to sell their products and buy inputs. Other areas such as educations, health, governance and employment can improve lives in the rural areas through the ICT communications in these areas.

It is also important to note that building a flourishing and sustainable CeC business model, which will help perpetuate the CEC business and to entice private sectors' interest in CeC operations and business, and in turn create more investments in the connectivity and proliferate the building of more CeCs.

**Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy**

Recognizing the importance of improving efficiently the connectivity of rural areas in order for the rural population to benefit from the regional network, a S-PPTA is deemed necessary to provide immediate assistance to the Government. An investment project may be planned to follow-up on the actual infrastructure development after the S-PPTA. Fund for the investment is to be requested from the ADB Regional Corporation and Integration (RCI) fund starting from 2011. During the investment project preparation stage, all necessary safeguards and social related assessment will be carried out in details.

**Impact**

The overall impact is to make ICT more accessible, affordable, inclusive, sustainable, and useful to remote and rural communities and entrepreneurs.

**Project Status**

Closed

**Country/Regional Strategy**

Inclusive economic growth

**Drivers of Change**

No gender elements

**Sector/Subsector**

Information and communication technology - ICT industries and ICT-enabled services

**Gender Equity and Mainstreaming**

No gender elements

**Description**

The main outcomes of the S-PPTA will be (i) a viable and feasible ICT rural connectivity plan that will provide efficient, reliable, and high speed coverage to UPZs and/or UPs levels, including identifying and designing community e-centers (CeCs) to serve communities and schools within these areas; and (ii) assess potential areas of private sector participation in the possible financing, construction, ownership, operation, maintenance and rehabilitation of the connectivity and CeCs.

**Impact**

The overall impact is to make ICT more accessible, affordable, inclusive, sustainable, and useful to remote and rural communities and entrepreneurs.
Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects

Environmental Aspects

Involuntary Resettlement

Indigenous Peoples

Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation

During Project Design

During Project Implementation

Business Opportunities

Consulting Services

The Consulting Services will be carried out by an international ICT expert (5 person-months) who will be recruited in accordance with ADB’s Guidelines on the Use of Consultants (2007, as amended from time to time). The Consultant will finalize the scope in consultation with the Government of Bangladesh during the kick-off meeting, and identify/engage the required network designers and site surveyors.

Responsible ADB Officer

Dong-Kyu Lee

Responsible ADB Department

South Asia Department

Responsible ADB Division

Transport and Communications Division, SARD

Executing Agencies

Asian Development Bank

Susan Lim

slim@adb.org

6 ADB Ave., Mandaluyong City

Prime Minister’s Office

Mr. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Adviser

anirchowdhury@pmo.gov.bd

Old Sangsad Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka 1215

Timetable

Concept Clearance

10 Mar 2010

Fact Finding

11 Mar 2010 to 25 Mar 2010

MRM

-

Approval

23 Jun 2010

Last Review Mission

-

PDS Creation Date

28 Jun 2010

Last PDS Update

29 Jun 2010

TA 7553-BAN

Milestones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Signing Date</th>
<th>Effectivity Date</th>
<th>Closing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 Jun 2010</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23 Jun 2010</td>
<td>15 Dec 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Revised</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 Jun 2010</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financing Plan/TA Utilization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADB</th>
<th>Cofinancing</th>
<th>Counterpart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gov</td>
<td>Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Project Sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225,000.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>225,000.00</td>
<td>23 Jun 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Page

https://www.adb.org/projects/44205-012/main

Request for Information

http://www.adb.org/forms/request-information-form?subject=44205-012

Date Generated

05 September 2019

ADB provides the information contained in this project data sheet (PDS) solely as a resource for its users without any form of assurance. Whilst ADB tries to provide high quality content, the information are provided "as is" without warranty of any kind, either express or implied, including without limitation warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, and non-infringement. ADB specifically does not make any warranties or representations as to the accuracy or completeness of any such information.