

Country Case Study: Bangladesh Project

On Mainstreaming Climate Change into Urban-Related Policies



// Image 1. "View of Dhaka, Bangladesh © www.remotelands.com

Bangladesh currently has a population of approximately 163 million people, which is projected to rise to 202 million by 2050¹. At present, around 35 per cent live in urban areas, growing at an annual rate of approximately 24 per cent². Most of Bangladesh's GDP is currently generated through the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors, while up to 75 per cent of total export earnings come from the manufacturing sector. However, poverty in the country is still pervasive, and major challenges include insufficient and unreliable infrastructure systems, access to capital, and inadequate land tenure systems.

Bangladesh, given its unique geographic, socio-economic, and physical characteristics, is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as sea level rise, and hydro meteorological disasters such as cyclones, tornadoes, floods, river erosion, mud slides, and drought. The country consists mostly of flat, low-lying land and accommodates the second largest river basin in the world, and only around ten per cent of the country lies over 10 m. above mean sea level. Bangladesh's climate is mainly influenced by its monsoon season, which is particularly characterised by heavy rain fall, which often floods up to 70 per cent of the

¹ ¹ESCAP Population Data Sheet, 2016. Online at http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/SPPS%20PS%20data%20sheet%202016%20v15-2.pdf
² The World Bank, 2017. Online at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SPURB.TOTL.IN.ZS

entire country due to its primarily low-lying topography. Sea level is projected to rise up to 90 cm. by 2100, which will pose additional significant challenges for the country.

Bangladesh has well-developed policies on climate change. It has ratified the Paris Agreement and its Nationally Determined Contribution highlights 'enhanced urban resilience' among one of 10 key areas to address the adverse impacts of climate change. Among the adaptation priorities, inherently urban issues are highlighted, such as climate resilient housing and improved drainage systems to address urban flooding. Bangladesh also has the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan from 2009, as well as a Second National Communication to the UNFCCC. Other policies that relate to climate change adaptation and mitigation include The Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 (http://www.bangladeshdeltaplan2100.org/) and The National Plan for Disaster Management 2010-2015.

Urban-related policy is less developed in Bangladesh. At present, the National Urban Sector Policy and the National Housing Policy, from 2014 and 2008 respectively, remain in draft stage. Some general development policies, such as the Perspective Plan for Bangladesh 2010-2021, the Sixth and Seventh Five-Year Plans also offer some policy guidance on urban-related issues, but Bangladesh lacks an overarching urban policy framework or strategic planning framework.

What has been done so far?

The two main policies related to climate change are the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) and the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) from 2009. However, these have recently been complemented by the Bangladesh Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Climate Change Agreement. NAPA contains a number of projects and programmes that are relevant to urban development, including;

i) Enhancing resilience of urban infrastructure and

industries to impacts of climate change including floods and cyclones,

ii) Formulation of land zoning for climate change adaptation in Bangladesh;

iii) Research towards land management;

iv) Identification of local hotspots for more targeted intervention;

v) Particular specification in the National Building Code for the building industry and infrastructure in potentially vulnerable areas, and;

vi) Strengthen capacities for risk assessment for flood, cyclone, drought, river bank erosion, pest attacks, earthquake, and epidemics, including assessments of climate change risks.

In response to the impending threats of disasters caused by climate change, the government developed the BCCSAP 2008, which was revised in 2009. The plan aimed at a propoor climate change strategy to achieve the government's vision of eradicating poverty and achieving economic and social well-being of the people. In this regard, 44 programmes were prepared under the following six pillars;

i) Food Security, Social Protection and Health,ii) Comprehensive Disaster Management,

- iii) Infrastructures,
- iv) Research and Knowledge Management,
- **v)** Mitigation and Low Carbon Development, and
- vi) Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening.

A number of programmes and sub-programmes highlighted in the BCCSAP 2009 are linked to urban planning and development. The table below shows urban related programmes and sub-programmes in the BCCSAP 2009.

This table does not show the numerous programmes and sub-programmes that inherently relate to urban areas, but with no specific urban focus, such as those relating to energy use or transportation. However, while capacity building is highlighted in Theme 4: Research and Knowledge Management, different ministries are assigned responsibilities, hence, mainstreaming, particularly at local level, is still limited.

Theme	Programme/Sub-Programme
Theme 3: Infrastructure	P.1 Repair and maintenance of existing flood embankments
	P.4 Improvement of urban drainage
	P.5 Adaptation against floods
Theme 4: Research and Knowledge Management	P.6 Monitoring internal and external migration
Theme 5: Mitigation and Low-carbon Development	P.6 Management of urban waste
	P.9 Energy and water efficiency in the built environment

Table 1. Areas of the BCCSAP with an urban focus

Nationally Determined Contribution

Bangladesh's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) emphasizes the adaptation and mitigation measures highlighted in the BCCSAP but also introduces new priorities. In particular, in adaptation, the NDC introduces 10 key areas to address adverse impacts of climate change, one of which is 'Enhanced urban resilience'. In addition, the NDC highlights adaptation priorities for Bangladesh, including 'Improvement of urban resilience through improvement of drainage system to address urban flooding'. In addition, the NDC also highlights several mitigation measures that go further than those prioritized in the BCCSAP. These measures include inherently urban actions, including greater energy efficiency and replacement of polluting cookstoves at the household level, and actions to improve rainwater harvesting and energy efficiency in commercial buildings.

Mainstreaming

The aforementioned climate change policies show that there has been some progress in mainstreaming **urban** issues into national climate change policy. When reviewing the situation of mainstreaming **climate change** into national urban policy, however, the picture gets more complicated.

To that end, the Bangladesh component of the project has conducted an in-depth analysis of the current urban policy

landscape, and has found that, with over 30 urban-related policy documents, but no comprehensive over-arching framework, the situation is complex. Some urban-related policies, such as the National Housing Policy, show high levels of alignment with the BCCSAP. However, some others, especially older policies that are still in place, show no alignment. Figure 1 below shows the linkages between the various urban-related policies and the BCCSAP.



// Figure 1. Linkages between the BCCSAP and national urban-related policies



// Image 2. Urban Development Directorate (UDD) Workshop ©Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)

Impacts of the project

The Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URP) under with the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) is implementing the Bangladesh component of the project. The Bangladesh component of the project specifically focuses on the following issues;

i) assessing national urban related policies;

ii) supporting policy and legislative reviews;

iii) exploring local urban linkages; and

iv) developing regional guidelines. The project started in 2015 with a national workshop on "Mainstreaming Climate Change in Urban Policies", led by Urban Development Directorate (UDD).

The project has achieved several outputs since it began implementation. Firstly, the project completed a comprehensive policy and legislation review to build understanding of the complex policy environment in Bangladesh. This report was completed and formed the basis of several knowledge products produced (One example is the source of the graphic presented in Figure 1.)

The project also conducted a review of development partners and NGO activities on urban development and

climate change. This work invited 38 organizations to share their work. Such work is important in Bangladesh because the development partner, NGO and civil society landscape is also a complex one. Many such actors are working with different government departments (as well as government at the sub-national level) on climate change and urban related projects and as such their engagement (and understanding 'who-does-what') is also critically important.

Meanwhile, the project also conducted a rapid analysis of government capacity at the national and local levels in order to identify capacity building priorities, in both the short and longer terms, to ensure effective mainstreaming. Finally, and following on from this, the project has developed a local-level mainstreaming guide to assist local governments with mainstreaming climate change into their planning. The guide was developed, tested and finalized in conjunction with two cities; Mymensingh and Barisal, and is designed to be rolled out nationwide to build the capacity of subnational government to mainstream climate change at the subnational level. These tools are important in ensuring that the project can achieve sustainable results beyond the period of its implementation.

Lessons learned from the project

In general, all urban-related policies that were formulated before 2009 need to be reviewed and updated with the goal of mainstreaming climate change issues. Plans, acts, and rules are the implementation modes for the policy.

Moreover, there is no legally binding document regarding the implementation of policy guidelines. As a consequence, BCCSAP 2009 and NAPA 2009 have no legal basis, and only a number of issues of outlined in these policies are legally covered under the Climate Change Trust Act. Thus, mainstreaming climate change policies and strategies still faces hurdles from a legal perspective. Bangladesh has started to impose certain steps to address these gaps and needs.

It is evident from the review of documents that disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation are often separately addressed both from policy and institutional perspectives. BCCSAP 2009 suggested Climate Change Focal Points in each concerned ministry to act as a focal point to regulate and implement climate change-related projects. As the local government is entrusted with approving and monitoring building construction and land use development, they can play a significant role to ensure the mainstreaming of climate change strategies at local and plot levels such as in-site planning, conservation of waterbodies, reduction of non-permeable surface, or greening of sites, etc. This is why the project's activity to develop local-level climate change mainstreaming guidelines is such an important step.

The Local Government Act prescribed two standing committees (Urban Planning Citizen Service and Development Committee and Communication and Physical Infrastructure Committee) to monitor and review planning and development activities at local level. However, the specific roles and functions of these committees are not defined in the Acts. Though there is a directive to prepare needed rules, this has not been adopted yet, and as a result these committees are often non-functional.



// Image 3. Consultation Workshop with Local Government: Mymensingh ©Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET)

Implementing the project in Bangladesh has faced several barriers, some of which were expected from the outset, while others were not anticipated:

- A highly complex amalgam of policies and plans, coupled with a challenging political environment poses barriers to the approval of certain policies (e.g. a National Urban Policy to provide an overarching framework to address urban issues) and plans
- Absence of necessary guidelines to incorporate climate change issues into urban planning at the national level
- Considering the scale of the challenges, some urban climate change issues are not very high on the political agenda and there is an absence of a strong political champion for mainstreaming
- Ongoing governance challenges, especially at the subnational level
- Lack of coordination and integration between government organizations and agencies
- Overlapping responsibility of government organizations
- Challenges in understanding and incorporating disaster management and climate change issues during planning process by local and national-level officials and
- A complex landscape of development partners, NGOs and civil society working on various climate and urban-related initiatives.

Where to go from here?

To support improved implementation of policies the following actions are necessary:

• Local government institutes should be empowered to support continued integration of climate change and



Some broad lessons have been learned from the implementation of the project in Bangladesh:

• The concept of risk-sensitive land use planning needs to be made mandatory in the planning process; this could be based on the procedure to incorporate risk-sensitive land

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