

Draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP)
March 20, 2020
Bangladesh Pandemic Preparedness and Response Project

1. Introduction/Project Description

An outbreak of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) has been spreading rapidly across the world since December 2019. As of March 20, 2020, a total of **245,732** cases in **180** countries and territories and **one** international conveyance (the Diamond Princess Cruise Ship) have been recorded with a death toll of **10,045**. As of March 20, 2020 eighteen (18) cases have been identified including 01 (one death in Bangladesh. The World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March, 2020 declared the rapidly spreading Coronavirus outbreak a pandemic, acknowledging what has seemed clear for some time—the virus will likely spread to all countries on the globe.

Given the novelty, transmission method and lack of effective antidotes, the outbreak has the potential for greater loss of life, significant disruptions in global supply chains, travel and associated industries, financial markets, commodity prices and availability of basic essentials, and economic losses in both developed and developing countries. The COVID-19 outbreak is affecting supply chains and disrupting manufacturing operations around the world. Economic activity has fallen in the past two months and is expected to remain depressed for months. The outbreak is taking place at a time when global economic activity is facing uncertainty and governments have limited policy space to act. The length and severity of impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak will depend on the projected length and location(s) of the outbreak, as well as on whether there are is a concerted, fast track response to support developing countries, where health systems are often weak. With proactive containment measures, the loss of life and economic impact of the outbreak could be mitigated. It is hence critical for the international community to work together on the underlying factors that are enabling the outbreak, on supporting policy responses, and on strengthening response capacity in developing countries—where health systems are weak, and populations most vulnerable.

It is critical to communicate to the public what is known about COVID-19, what is unknown, what is being done, and actions to be taken on a regular basis. Preparedness and response activities should be conducted in a participatory, community-based way that are informed and continually optimized according to community feedback to detect and respond to concerns, rumours and misinformation. Changes in preparedness and response interventions should be announced and explained ahead of time and be developed based on community perspectives. Responsive, empathic, transparent and consistent messaging in local languages through trusted channels of communication, using community-based networks and key influencers and building capacity of local entities, is essential to establish authority and trust. (The WHO ***“COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan—Operational Planning Guidelines to Support Country Preparedness and Response, 2020”***)

The proposed ***Bangladesh Pandemic Preparedness and Response Project*** aims to respond and mitigate the threat posed by COVID-19 in Bangladesh and strengthen national systems for public health preparedness for the present and future. This project was selected for COVID-19 financing because there have been 5 confirmed cases in Bangladesh and a far greater number in the neighboring countries. In addition, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The scope and the components of this project are fully aligned with the COVID-19 Fast Track Facility, using standard components as described in para 2 of the COVID-19 Board paper. This project complements both ongoing technical assistance being provided with financing from the Resolve to Save Lives Trust Fund (P170121), the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (P170337), as well as, longer-term development work in the Health Sector, including the Health Sector Support Project (P160846), which seeks to *strengthen the health, nutrition and population (HNP) sector's core management systems and delivery of essential HNP services with a focus on selected geographical areas*. This project has triggered paragraph 12 of the Investment Project Financing Bank Policy (*Situation of Urgent Need of Assistance or Capacity Constraints*).

The proposed Project will focus on the following key areas:

a. **Emergency COVID-19 Response.** This would provide immediate support to Bangladesh to limit local transmission through containment strategies. It would support enhancement of disease detection capacities through provision of technical expertise, laboratory equipment and systems to ensure prompt case finding and contact tracing. It would enable Bangladesh to mobilize surge response capacity through trained and well-equipped frontline health workers and would help to strengthen disease surveillance systems, public health laboratories, and epidemiological capacity for early detection and confirmation of cases; combine detection of new cases with active contact tracing; support epidemiological investigation; strengthen risk assessment; and provide on-time data and information for guiding decision-making and response and mitigation activities. This will also ensure the real-time exchange of information, advice and opinions, through a mix of communication and engagement strategies, such as media and social media communications, mass awareness campaigns, health promotion, social mobilization, stakeholder engagement and community engagement. Notably, Bangladesh was assessed as not having demonstrated capacity in any risk communications components during the 2016 Joint External Evaluation.

b. **Health System Strengthening for improved clinical management.** Assistance would be provided to the health care system to ensure that optimal medical care is provided to COVID-19 confirmed and suspected patients, and essential community services maintained, in such a way that minimizes risks to patients and health personnel, including training health facilities staff and front-line workers on risk mitigation measures and providing them with the appropriate protective equipment and hygiene materials. As COVID-19 would place a substantial burden on inpatient and outpatient health care services, support would be provided to ensure that health facilities are equipped to deliver critical medical services, and to cope with the increased demand for services posed by the outbreak. Specifically, a multi-pronged approach will be adopted which focuses on protocols and guidelines; health worker training and capacity building for clinical management; in-patient care and surge capacity. The capacity of approximately 10 selected facilities will be assessed, and upgraded to ensure that they can serve as focal hospitals for management of COVID-19 (including Isolation and ICU support). This includes, for example, the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH); the Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases (BITID); Combined Military Hospitals (CMHs)/ Medical College Hospitals in 8 divisions for Isolation and case management.

c. **Enhanced capacity for future Public Health Emergencies.** This will support activities which aim to strengthen the resilience of the health system to address future health emergencies. Specifically, support will be provided to the following key areas, which are consistent with the activities identified above (under a and c) (a) improving the capacity of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC); (b) enhancing surveillance capabilities; and (c) developing and maintain stockpiling of critical medical supplies; and (d) operational research.

The proposed Project is being prepared under the World Bank's Environment and Social Framework (ESF). As per the Environmental and Social Standard (ESS) 10-Stakeholders Engagement and Information Disclosure, the implementing agency should provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation.

The overall objective of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to define a plan for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation, throughout the entire duration of the proposed project. The SEP outlines the ways in which the project team will communicate with stakeholders and includes a mechanism by which people can raise concerns, provide feedback, or make complaints about project and any activities related to the project. Soliciting feedback of the general population is essential for the success of the project in order to ensure smooth collaboration between project staff and local communities and to minimize and mitigate

environmental and social risks related to the proposed project activities. In the context of infectious diseases, broad, culturally appropriate, and adapted awareness raising activities are particularly important to properly sensitize the communities to the risks related to infectious diseases. In essence the stakeholder engagement for this Project will give attention to:

*General **awareness raising and stakeholder engagement** activities more specifically, **involvement of all relevant stakeholders**, including the local population, health workers and health officials.*

*Culturally appropriate, and adapted awareness raising activities that are particularly important to properly **sensitize the communities and ensure an adequate mechanism for grievance redressal under the project.***

*Awareness raising and stakeholder **engagement with disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups on infectious diseases and medical treatments**, in particular, adapted to take into account their particular sensitivities, concerns and to ensure a full understanding of project activities and benefits.*

2. Stakeholder identification and analysis

Project stakeholders are defined as individuals, groups or other entities who:

- (i) are impacted or likely to be impacted directly or indirectly, positively or adversely, by the Project (also known as '**affected parties**'); and
- (ii) may have an interest in the Project ('**interested parties**'). They include individuals or groups whose interests may be affected by the Project and who have the potential to influence the Project outcomes in any way.

Cooperation and negotiation with the stakeholders throughout the Project development often also require the identification of persons within the groups who act as legitimate representatives of their respective stakeholder group, i.e. the individuals who have been entrusted by their fellow group members with advocating the groups' interests in the process of engagement with the Project. Verification of stakeholder representatives (i.e. the process of confirming that they are legitimate and genuine advocates of the community they represent) remains an important task in establishing contact with the community stakeholders. Legitimacy of the community representatives can be verified by talking informally to a random sample of community members and heeding their views on who can be representing their interests in the most effective way.

2.1 Methodology

In order to meet best practice approaches, the project will apply the following principles for stakeholder engagement:

- **Openness and life-cycle approach:** public consultations for the project(s) will be arranged during the whole life-cycle, carried out in an open manner, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion or intimidation;
- **Informed participation and feedback:** information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an appropriate format; opportunities are provided for communicating stakeholders' feedback, for analyzing and addressing comments and concerns;
- **Inclusiveness and sensitivity:** stakeholder identification is undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for the projects is inclusive. All stakeholders at all times encouraged to be involved in the consultation process. Equal access to information is provided to all stakeholders. Sensitivity to stakeholders' needs is the key principle underlying the selection of engagement methods. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups, in particular women, returnees from affected countries, drug addicts, persons with disabilities, elderly and the cultural sensitivities of diverse ethnic groups, family members and associates of those already contracted the virus, and those living in remote or inaccessible areas.
- **Reduction of Human Contacts:** under this special circumstance, the project will endeavor to reduce large human gathering during stakeholder engagement exercise, especially when consulting with communities. Various

alternative means (like getting online feedback, web meeting, email, small gathering etc.) may be used to ensure meaningful consultation, while minimize the exposure risk of COVID-19 among participants.

For the purposes of effective and tailored engagement, stakeholders of the proposed project can be divided into the following core categories:

- **Affected Parties** – persons, groups and other entities within the Project Area of Influence (PAI) that are directly influenced (actually or potentially) by the project and/or have been identified as most susceptible to change associated with the project, and who need to be closely engaged in identifying impacts and their significance, as well as in decision-making on mitigation and management measures;
- **Other Interested Parties** – individuals/groups/entities that may not experience direct impacts from the Project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the project and/or who could affect the project and the process of its implementation in some way; and
- **Vulnerable Groups** – persons who may be disproportionately impacted or further disadvantaged by the project(s) as compared with any other groups due to their vulnerable status¹, and that may require special engagement efforts to ensure their equal representation in the consultation and decision-making process associated with the project.

2.2. Affected parties

Affected Parties include local communities, community members and other parties that may be subject to direct impacts from the Project. Specifically, the following individuals and groups fall within this category:

- COVID-19 infected people who became infected as a result of project activities (e.g. lack of access to PPE at a work site)
- Workers in the quarantine facilities and ***potential workers who will be engaged in refurbishment of health facilities***
- Patients in the health facilities where refurbishment is ongoing other than those affected by COVID-19
- Workers at construction sites of laboratories, quarantine centers and screening posts
- Public Health Workers in the hospitals the project is engaged in
- Officials of the Implementing Agency (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, MoHFW) working in the project

2.3. Other interested parties

The projects' stakeholders also include parties other than the directly affected communities, including:

- Officials of Government agencies, directly and indirectly linked with project, either local or central
- Traditional media
- Participants/ influencers of social media
- Politicians
- Other national and international health organizations
- Other national & International NGOs
- Businesses with international links
- The public at large

¹ Vulnerable status may stem from an individual's or group's race, national, ethnic or social origin, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, property, age, culture, literacy, ***sickness, living in close proximity to those infected***, physical or mental disability, poverty or economic disadvantage, and dependence on unique natural resources.

2.4. Disadvantaged / vulnerable individuals or groups

It is particularly important to understand whether project impacts may disproportionately fall on disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups, who often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impacts of a project and to ensure that awareness raising and stakeholder engagement with disadvantaged or vulnerable individuals or groups [on infectious diseases and medical treatments in particular, be adapted to take into account such groups or individuals particular sensitivities, concerns and cultural sensitivities and to ensure a full understanding of project activities and benefits. The vulnerability may stem from person's origin, gender, age, health condition, economic deficiency and financial insecurity, disadvantaged status in the community (e.g. minorities or fringe groups), dependence on other individuals or natural resources, especially those living in remote, insecure or inaccessible areas, etc. Engagement with the vulnerable groups and individuals often requires the application of specific measures and assistance aimed at the facilitation of their participation in the project-related decision making so that their awareness of and input to the overall process are commensurate to those of the other stakeholders.

Within the Project, the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, when they are involved or engaged with project activities specifically, may include and are not limited to the following:

- Elderly (especially those of 65 years and above)
- Patient with chronic diseases and preexisting health conditions (Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, hypertension, cancer etc)
- People living *en masse* in close quarters (hostels and prison population)
- Illiterate people
- Ethnic and religious minorities
- People with disabilities
- Drug addicts
- those living in remote or inaccessible areas
- Female-headed households
- Ethnic minority groups
- People living in poverty

Vulnerable groups within the communities affected by the project will be further confirmed and consulted through dedicated means, as appropriate. Description of the methods of engagement that will be undertaken by the project is provided in the following sections.

3. Stakeholder Engagement Program

3.1. Summary of stakeholder engagement done during project preparation

Due to the emergency situation and the need to address issues related to COVID-19, the characteristics of the virus spread/ transmission, consultations on broader management of COVID-19 will be limited to public authorities, MoHFW and other Government officials, NGOs and health experts. The MoHFW has set-up an inter-ministerial National Committee for COVID-19, chaired by the Honourable Minister of MoHFW and comprising secretaries of relevant government ministries (including foreign affairs, home affairs, finance, disaster management, etc.) and selected development partners. The Committee is meeting regularly to take decisions regarding the emergency. The composition of the Committee is as follows:

1. Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Division, Bangladesh Secretariat
2. Principal Secretary, Honorable Prime Minister's Office
3. Senior Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
4. Senior Secretary, Public Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs
5. Senior Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
6. Senior Secretary, Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives
7. Secretary, Ministry of Defense

8. Secretary, Finance Division, Ministry of Finance
9. Secretary, Security Services Division, Ministry of Home Affairs
10. Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration
11. Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
12. Secretary, Health Education and Family Welfare Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
13. Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare
14. Secretary, Ministry of Religious Affairs
15. Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
16. Secretary, Ministry of Information
17. Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
18. Director General, Directorate General of Health Services
19. President/ Secretary General, Bangladesh Medical Association
20. President/ Secretary General, *Swadhinata Chikitsak Parisdhad* (SWACHIP)
21. Director, Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), Directorate General of Health Services
22. President, Bangladesh Private Clinic and Diagnostic Owners Association (BPCDOA)
23. President, Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners Association
24. World Health Organization (WHO) representative, Bangladesh
25. Country Director, World Bank (WB), Bangladesh
26. Country Director, Bangladesh Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
27. UNICEF Representative, Bangladesh
28. USAID Representative, Bangladesh

In addition, the DGHS has been meeting with technical experts of the government and non-government agencies to define the scope of the proposed project.

The Project will have broader stakeholder engagement focused on consulting with project affected peoples more directly (even if virtually and not in person).

3.2. Summary of project stakeholder needs and methods, tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement

The project PIU will engage with PAPs on an ongoing basis taking the risk of virus spread into account. The details will be prepared during the update of this SEP. It should always be borne in mind that mass gatherings of consultation meeting can contribute to the transmission of respiratory pathogens, such as the virus causing the current outbreaks of COVID-19 as a result in a large number of people being in close contact. Various alternative means described in 2.1 above may be used to ensure meaningful consultation. In addition, miking/ broadcasting system in mosques (especially in rural areas where IT systems are lacking), schools or community radio system can be used for information disclosure purpose. Further, the World Health Organization's (WHO) mass gathering guidance can be sought (Key Planning Recommendations for Mass Gatherings in the context of the current COVID-19 outbreak, Feb 14, 2020 (available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331004/WHO-2019-nCoV-POEmassgathering-2020.1-eng.pdf>).

3.3. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Step	Actions to be taken
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Implement national risk-communication and community engagement plan for COVID-19, including details of anticipated public health measures (use the existing procedures for pandemic influenza if available)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct rapid behaviour assessment to understand key target audience, perceptions, concerns, influencers and preferred communication channels
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare local messages and pre-test through a participatory process, specifically targeting key stakeholders and at-risk groups
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify trusted community groups (local influencers such as community leaders, religious leaders, health workers, community volunteers) and local networks (women's groups, youth groups, business groups, traditional healers, etc.)
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish and utilize clearance processes for timely dissemination of messages and materials in local languages and adopt relevant communication channels
	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage with existing public health and community-based networks, media, local NGOs, schools, local governments and other sectors such as healthcare service providers, education sector, business, travel and food/agriculture sectors using a consistent mechanism of communication
	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilize two-way 'channels' for community and public information sharing such as hotlines (text and talk), responsive social media such as U-Report where available, and radio shows, with systems to detect and rapidly respond to and counter misinformation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish large scale community engagement for social and behaviour change approaches to ensure preventive community and individual health and hygiene practices in line with the national public health containment recommendations
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematically establish community information and feedback mechanisms including through: social media monitoring; community perceptions, knowledge, attitude and practice surveys; and direct dialogues and consultations
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure changes to community engagement approaches are based on evidence and needs, and ensure all engagement is culturally appropriate and empathetic.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Document lessons learned to inform future preparedness and response activities

3.4. Proposed strategy for information disclosure and consultation process

The project will adapt to different situation and requirements as they develop to disclose information regarding COVID-19 and other relevant issues. Information will build on national guidance on avoiding the spread of the virus, and will focus specifically on risks associated with project activities.

Table. Strategy for Information Disclosure and Consultation Process (will be updated during implementation)

Project stage	Topic of consultation and list of information disclosure	Method used	Timetable: Location and dates	Target stakeholders	Responsibilities

4. Resources and Responsibilities for implementing stakeholder engagement activities

4.1. Resources

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (**MoHFW**), as the Implementing Agency (IA) will be in charge of stakeholder engagement activities through its Project Implementation Unit (PIU). The contact point for the

stakeholder engagement will be the Project Director (PD). The Project has budgetary provisions for SEP implementation and the ES experts to be hired as a part of the PIU will monitor it. Project's sub-component 1.2, Community Engagement, can be used to fund the stakeholder management activities.

4.2. Management functions and responsibilities

MoHFW will be responsible for carrying out stakeholder engagement activities, while working closely together with other entities, such as local government units, media outlets, health workers, hospital administration etc. The stakeholder engagement activities will be documented through quarterly progress reports, to be shared with the World Bank.

5. Grievance Mechanism

The main objective of a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is to assist to resolve complaints and grievances in a timely, effective and efficient manner that satisfies all parties involved. Specifically, it provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective and lasting outcomes. It also builds trust and cooperation as an integral component of broader community consultation that facilitates corrective actions. Specifically, the GRM:

- Provides affected people with avenues for making a complaint or resolving any dispute that may arise during the course of the implementation of projects;
- Ensures that appropriate and mutually acceptable redress actions are identified and implemented to the satisfaction of complainants; and
- Avoids the need to resort to judicial proceedings.

5.1. Description of GRM

The DGHS has a web-based, text message-based and phone-based platforms for citizen engagement that will be used as the GRM for the project (<http://app.dghs.gov.bd/complaintbox/?actn=adsrch>). The MoHFW has approved guidelines for grievance redressal system with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and timelines, which will be adhered to under the project. *A quarterly report on project related grievances will be shared with the World Bank team.*

6. Monitoring and Reporting

6.1. Reporting back to stakeholder groups

The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary in the course of project implementation in order to ensure that the information presented herein is consistent and is the most recent, and that the identified methods of engagement remain appropriate and effective in relation to the project context and specific phases of the development. Any major changes to the project related activities and to its schedule will be duly reflected in the SEP. **Quarterly** summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative actions will be collated by responsible staff and referred to the senior management of the project. The summaries will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and the nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the Project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner. Information on public engagement activities undertaken by the Project during every year may be conveyed to the stakeholders in two ways:

- Publication of a standalone annual report on project's interaction with the stakeholders.
- A number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be monitored by the project on a regular basis, including the following parameters:
 - Number of consultation meetings (virtual) and other public discussions/forums conducted monthly, quarterly, and annually;
 - Frequency of public engagement activities;
 - Number of public grievances received monthly, quarterly, and annually) and number of those resolved within the prescribed timeline;

- Number of press materials published/broadcasted in the local, regional, and national media]