

PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID) CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: PIDC23221

Project Name	College Education Development Project (P154577)
Region	SOUTH ASIA
Country	Bangladesh
Sector(s)	Tertiary education (95%), Public administration- Education (5%)
Theme(s)	Education for the knowledge economy (100%)
Lending Instrument	Investment Project Financing
Project ID	P154577
Borrower(s)	People's Republic of Bangladesh
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Education
Environmental Category	B-Partial Assessment
Date PID Prepared/ Updated	01-Sep-2015
Date PID Approved/ Disclosed	11-Nov-2015
Estimated Date of Appraisal Completion	19-Feb-2016
Estimated Date of Board Approval	19-May-2016
Concept Review Decision	Track II - The review did authorize the preparation to continue

I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

With a population of around 160 million, Bangladesh has made considerable progress in economic growth and poverty reduction during the past decade. Bangladesh's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at an average rate of 6.1% in the past ten years, resulting in a substantial decline in the incidence of poverty. The rapid increase in per capita income has been attributed to sustained economic growth, declining population growth and higher remittance inflow from a growing stock of migrant workers. These developments have led Bangladesh to graduate from Lower Income Country (LIC) to Lower Middle Income Country (LMIC) status in 2015, based on its \$1,080 GNI per capita (Atlas Method) in FY2014.

Human development outcomes have also improved for Bangladesh. There have been impressive gains in several social indicators, including improvements in literacy, life expectancy, and infant mortality. Particularly, significant progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in education. The net primary enrollment rate increased from 66.5

percent in 2005 to 97.3 percent in 2013. Enrollments and pass rates have also increased at the secondary and higher secondary levels since the early 1990s . Gender parity has already been achieved at both the primary and secondary education levels. The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) in tertiary education increased from 5 percent to 13 percent between 2000 and 2012. The steady increase in the number of students completing higher secondary education has placed a growing pressure on the tertiary education sector to absorb a large and increasing population of eligible secondary students in recent years.

Improving skills and productivity are crucial to Bangladesh's quest to accelerate economic growth and become a middle income country. The labor market is demanding more educated and higher skilled professionals. Economic growth is expected to continue with around 15 million jobs projected to be created over the next decade in seven key sectors . Job expansion across these sectors will demand more skilled professionals in managerial, technical and leadership positions. However, the current skill levels of the labor force is unlikely to support future market demands. The majority of workers in Bangladesh is under-educated - 76 percent of workers have a secondary educational qualification or below and only 22 percent have a tertiary education level degree, while around two percent have a technical vocational education and training (TVET) certificate or diploma across five major fields of studies in Commerce, Education, Finance, Manufacturing and Public Administration . While there is an abundance of low-skilled workers, there is a strong demand for graduates with higher cognitive and non-cognitive skills and job-specific technical skills. This would require improving the quality and relevance of tertiary education so that education institutions are equipped to produce graduates with more market-relevant skills.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

In Bangladesh, the tertiary education system consists of two main sub-sectors: (i) universities, directly under the supervision of the University Grant Commission (UGC) for the purposes of funding and quality control; and (ii) affiliated colleges, whose funding is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MoE), while quality control is with the National University (NU) with which they are affiliated . Currently there are around three million students enrolled in tertiary education institutions. Out of these, the university system accounts for about 853,000 (34 percent) students across 115 public and private universities; the NU college system accounts for about 1.6 million (64 percent) tertiary students across 1,731 affiliated colleges in Bangladesh; and the remaining about 60,000 (2 percent) in the Bangladesh Open University.

The NU affiliated government and non-government colleges offer bachelor's and master's programs in a large number of subjects (currently the number of subjects is 35). Government and non-government colleges have diverse capacities and characteristics, different management and governance structures and enjoy varying degrees of financial autonomy. General characteristics such as enrollments, seat capacity, facilities, programs offered and quality, vary across the colleges. Government colleges tend to be large institutions, located mostly in metropolitan cities and district headquarters, while non-government colleges tend to have smaller institutions extending to sub-district and rural areas. As non-government colleges (1,471) have rapidly expanded compared to government ones (260), student enrolments are almost at par across both types of institutions.

Government colleges are administered through the government service rules while affiliated non-government colleges are governed by their Governing Bodies. In government colleges, teachers are recruited through the Public Service Commission (PSC) and their salaries are commensurate with the government salary scale. Administrative decisions are mostly taken by the Government through

the MoE and the DSHE under the MoE. By contrast, teacher recruitment in non-government colleges is conducted through committees with representation from NU and DSHE and teachers are recruited from a pool that is pre-certified by the Nongovernment Teacher Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA).

Both government and non-government colleges produce the largest proportion of tertiary graduates in Bangladesh. The majority of the college graduates is employed in the public sector, especially jobs related to management and teaching profession while there is a growing demand for them in priority sectors in the private sector. The NU's large number of government and non-government colleges and extensive network therefore make it the critical subsector for affecting the necessary quantitative and qualitative improvements in the tertiary education sector. However, the college subsector suffers from a myriad of deeply rooted challenges. These include: (i) poor quality and relevance of teaching and learning; (ii) weak governance and management practices; and (iii) inadequate resources and inefficient financial management; and (iv) limited access.

The Government of Bangladesh's Perspective Plan (2010-2021) identified that upgrading the quality of tertiary education institutions to international standards is a prerequisite for attaining its Vision of becoming a middle income country. The proposed Project will support the implementation of the Government's plans to improve the quality and relevance of colleges and strengthen the governance and management of the college subsector as articulated in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2010 and the Strategic Plan for Higher Education (2006–2026). The NEP 2010 highlights the need to improve the basic teaching-learning facilities and teaching force in the colleges as well as to decentralize central NU to divisional levels to enhance the system's education service delivery. The Strategic Plan for Higher Education (2006–2026) clearly emphasizes the significant roles that the NU and its affiliated colleges play for tertiary education in Bangladesh, and the need for quality enhancement of the graduates and for overcoming administrative and governance challenges in the subsector.

Relationship to CAS

The proposed Project is fully consistent with the Bank's Country Assistance Strategy Progress Report (CASPR) 2011-2015 and aligned with the draft Systematic Country Diagnostic.

II. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s) (From PCN)

The project development objective is to improve the planning and management of college education subsector and to strengthen the quality and relevance of selected government and non-government colleges.

Key Results (From PCN)

- Increased level of satisfaction of students, faculty and employers regarding the quality and relevance of teaching and learning in grant supported colleges;
- Number of colleges completed at least one tracer study;
- Development of Sector Strategic Plan; and
- Number of beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender).

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

The proposed Project would aim at improving the planning and management of college education subsector and to strengthen the quality and relevance of selected government and non-government colleges through a set of selective initiatives. The need of the subsector is significant. As a first support to the subsector, the Project will take a prudent, selective and progressive approach and focus on activities which can bring visible benefits to the subsector.

The Project would be financed through a US\$100 million Credit from the International Development Association (IDA), using an Investment Project Financing (IPF) lending instrument. It would be implemented over a four year period. It would support the development of the college subsector through three Components: (i) Component 1: Improving the Quality and Relevance of College Education; (ii) Component 2: Strengthening the Governance and Management of the College Education Subsector; and (iii) Enhancing System Management. Components 1 and 3 would follow transaction-based disbursement while Component 2 would use a Results-Based Financing (RBF) modality to support the implementation of the Government's subsector reforms to strengthen the governance and management of college education.

Component 1: Improving the Planning and Management of the College Education Subsector

The objective of this component is to improve the planning and management of the college education subsector, using a RBF modality. The Component would support the implementation of the following interventions at the national and participating institution levels: (i) development of a Strategic Plan for the college subsector with adoption of system-wide reforms in phases at the national level and development of institutional strategic plans and annual performance reports at the institutional level; and (ii) improvement of teacher management system (including both recruitment and staff development) through filling the teacher vacancies of government colleges and establishment of an appropriate teachers selection commission for the non-government college teachers.

Component 2: Improving the Quality and Relevance of College Education

Sub-component 2.1: Improving the quality and relevance of teaching-learning through Institutional Development Grants

Under this sub-component, an Institutional Development Grant (IDG) will be provided to a selected number of eligible government and non-government colleges to support the implementation of Institutional Development Plans (IDP) in the following areas: (i) Upgrading and modernizing basic teaching-learning facilities of colleges; (ii) Improving the connectivity through existing Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN); (iii) Development of soft skills programs and industry linkages (i.e. internship, job placement cell, tracer studies, etc.); and (iv) Institutional self-assessments for quality assurance.

The proposed competitive Grant program will be voluntary. The colleges will be grouped according to their characteristics and will participate based on eligibility criteria. An Operations Manual will be developed to assist colleges for preparing and implementing their IDP. The design will benefit from the experience of the IDA-financed Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) in Bangladesh.

Sub-component 2.2: Strengthening teaching capacity and management in colleges

The objective of this sub-component is to bring qualitative improvements in teaching and management in the college subsector. This objective would be achieved through support for: (i) training of trainers; (ii) teacher training; and (iii) capacity building of college management staff. The Project will also support the development of training contents and materials. Distance learning through online platforms with international and national training providers will also be developed to reach the large number of beneficiaries.

Teachers from colleges (about 500) conducting Honors and Masters courses will receive updated content and methodology training under the project in 12 priority subject areas: priorities in the country's development goals and students' employment prospects. These are physics, chemistry, mathematics, statistics, economics, accounting, finance/banking, management, marketing, Bangla and English Language. Training will also be provided to College managers and Heads of Departments of these colleges.

Component 3: Enhancing System Management

The objectives of this component are to ensure sufficient system capacity for the implementation of policy interventions and effective project management in achieving its PDO. These objectives would be met through two subcomponents: (i) Project Management and Communication; and (ii) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

Sub-component 3.1: Project Management and Communication

The objective of this sub-component is to ensure sufficient capacity for implementation of policy interventions and various activities and dissemination of information. This sub-component would support project management, including establishment of a Project Implementation Unit (PIU), specific capacity building and technical assistance necessary for project implementation and communication and information dissemination.

Sub-component 3.2: Monitoring and Evaluation

The objective of this sub-component is to build an effective M&E system. This subcomponent would support M&E activities, including necessary surveys, assessments and validation of outputs, and analytical studies to strengthen the knowledge on the subsector. The monitoring of reform activities would be carried out by respective departments of NU and DSHE with the support of the M&E unit of the PIU.

IV. Safeguard Policies that might apply

Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project	Yes	No	TBD
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01	×		
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		×	
Forests OP/BP 4.36		×	
Pest Management OP 4.09		×	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		×	

Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10	x		
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12		x	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		x	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		x	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		x	

V. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	130.00	Total Bank Financing:	100.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		
Financing Source			Amount
BORROWER/RECIPIENT			30.00
International Development Association (IDA)			100.00
Total			130.00

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