

End-line Evaluation of Access to Information (a2i) – II Project

Final Evaluation Report

Submitted to
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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
4P	Public-Private-People Partnership
7FYP	7th Five Year Plan
a2i	Access to Information
APA	Annual Performance Agreement
APICTA	Asia Pacific ICT Alliance
BPR	Business Process Reengineering
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CTO	Chief Technology Officer
EGDI	E - Government Development Index
EPI	E - Participation Index
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
G2P	Government to Person
GED	General Economic Division
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HR	Human Resource
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT4D	Information and communication technologies for development
iLab	Innovation Lab
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
ITEX	Innovation & Technology Exhibition
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LDG	Local Development Grant
M.R.	Marriage Registration
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFS	Mobile Financial Services
MIS	Management information system
MMC	Multimedia Classroom

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MSISDN	Mobile Station International Subscriber Directory Number
MTR	Midterm Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPF	National Portal Framework
NPM	National Project Manager
OD	Organization Development
P2G	Person to Government
PEB	Programme's Executive Board
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
RMG	Ready-Made Garment
S2F	Start to Finish
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFYP	Seventh Five Year Plan
SIF	Service Innovation Fund
SMS	Short Message Service
SPS	Service Process Simplification
SSN	Social Safety Net
SSNP	Social Safety Net Programme
TCV	Time-Cost-Visits
UDC	Union Digital Centre
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSD	Unstructured Supplementary Service Data
WSIS	World Summit on the Information Society

Executive Summary

Government of Bangladesh, with support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other Development Partners, had initiated Access to Information (a2i) project to improve transparency, enhance public sector effectiveness and to reduce inefficiencies in accessing basic public services, especially by citizens from underserved communities. The a2i project leverages benefits of information and communication technologies, local knowledge and global best practices; and works as an innovation intermediary with whole-of-government approach to facilitate realisation of the goal of Digital Bangladesh, Vision 2021 – Perspective Plan of Bangladesh, the 7th Five Year Plan and the attainment of SDGs. The a2i project is also an important enabler of the three-pronged strategy identified in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to address the deficits of public administration and public service delivery in Bangladesh.

During the first phase of the Access to Information (a2i) Project, fundamental progress was made in improving access to public services through electronic means. At the same instance, it also demonstrated the criticality of expanding the breadth and depth of such simplified services and improving the service delivery model to counter the impact of outdated manual processes, staff resistance to change, and a lack of transparency that still impedes citizens' access to public information and government services. The 2nd phase of a2i project aims to address these challenges; and to reduce the time, difficulty and costs of obtaining government services by 20 million citizens from under-served communities of Bangladesh. These are to be achieved through effective implementation of five inter-related components of programmatic interventions: (i) improving e-Service delivery processes with second generation of integrated, inter-operable e-government applications; (ii) capacitating and sensitizing government officials; (iii) forging strong policy and strategy links to ensure an effective enabling environment; (iv) promoting innovation; and (v) establishing linkage with public and private sectors and creating awareness among the citizens. Gender equality remains at the core of all a2i initiatives.

The End-line Evaluation of a2i phase II project was commissioned to assess the performance of the project with regard to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and results during Phase-II of project implementation; and the evaluation findings are expected to contribute to the design of the new Aspire to Innovate (a2i) project. Mixed-Methods Evaluation approach, involving qualitative conversational interviews, focused group discussions, direct observation of programmatic outputs and interventions, Outcome Harvesting interactions, and iterative review of programmatic reports and related literature were used to weigh up the outcomes against the programme objectives and to develop insights on enhancing the impact of future interventions and initiatives. These findings, insights and recommendations are encapsulated in this Final Evaluation Report.

The findings of End-line Evaluation point to noteworthy achievements of a2i phase-II; and the whole-of-government approach adopted by a2i has reinforced governance performance at national as well as local level. The project has enabled easier access of public services to an estimated 150 million citizens, many of whom are from underserved communities; and as

on December 2018 a total of 39.21 million beneficiaries have availed 150+ e-Services: 69 government services, 80 private services and more than 10 banking and financial services¹⁵. The average distance of service accessing points, the Union Digital Centres – the one-stop service outlets located at Union Parishad, has also come down to 4 km as against 5.5 km in 2015. The 5300+ UDCs continue to be one of the flagship initiatives of a2i project; various studies report that UDCs have helped reduce Time, Cost and Visit (TCV) for obtaining services by 57% - an impressive accomplishment in improving service delivery practices.

In broader perspective a2i has been able to develop an innovation culture within the public administration system and among the civil servants; and has emerged as an influential entity for policy advocacy and reform. As a consequence of these favourable policy and legislative efforts, instruments, rules and regulatory frameworks, Bangladesh has significantly moved forward in the ranking of UN E-Government Development Index and secured 51st place in the E-Participation Index.

While a2i project has managed to achieve remarkable results over past years across many domains and strategic areas, even beyond their core mandate, there are certain areas of weakness which needs to be attended to. There is a need for organisational and regulatory strengthening of the functioning of UDCs for these centres to become the unified channel for delivering digital service (and products) of government as well as private sector at the grassroots. Even though Gender equality remains at the core of all a2i initiatives, the Evaluation did not manage to gather sufficient evidence with regard to programme level emphasis of a2i on gender-specific targets; and there is an urgent need of taking corrective and affirmative measures for achieving different goals of a2i's gender strategy.

The programmatic organisation of a2i has so far been rather flat; and this agile ways of working has allowed flexibility of entrepreneurial functioning, necessary during initial years of a2i operation. At the same time the Evaluation team has noted limitations of such ways-of-working, which in some ways has restrained its performance, especially on occasions when there is a need for cross-functional and inter-disciplinary approaches. This also seems to have impacted the programme level operational data-system of a2i operation; and would perhaps call for certain level of corrective measures.

Further, it would be helpful for the a2i project team to focus on consolidating the gains towards institutionalisation and mainstreaming of successful high-impact initiatives (such as UDCs, e-Nothi, e-Mutation and P2G payment system). This should be complemented with nuanced efforts of capacitating a2i partners at all levels: Ministries / Divisions, Districts and sub-District levels, through planned effusion of organisational competences and good practices of a2i to its partners – so that the initiatives ideated and spearheaded by the project could eventually be transferred for mainstreaming by respective Ministries and Divisions.

1. Introduction

The Access to Information (a2i) Project was initiated in 2007 at the Prime Minister's Office with support from UNDP and USAID. The main objective was to increase transparency, improve governance and efficiency in public service delivery. The a2i Project is part of a three-pronged strategy identified in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to address the deficits of public administration and public service delivery in Bangladesh. a2i focuses primarily on bringing information and services to citizens' doorsteps to reduce inefficiencies in terms of 'TCV' –time (T), cost (C) and number of visits (V), associated with obtaining government services in Bangladesh.

During the first phase of a2i (2007-2011), fundamental progress was made in improving access to public services through introduction of various tools of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). A critical need was revealed to expand the horizon and intensity of various simplified services to address the backwardness of widespread outdated ambiguous manual processes in government service delivery together with resistance of civil service staffs to change their attitude towards general citizens. Such lessons from the first phase of the project led to the initiation of the second phase of a2i in 2012. Considering the volume and scope of the project, the government shifted the institutional set-up of a2i from the Prime Minister's Office to the ICT Division of the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology since July 1, 2018. Accordingly a2i is considered as a full-fledged program of the ICT Ministry.

The current report documents the findings of an independent external end-line evaluation of the performance of Access to Information (a2i)-II project. This end-line evaluation was conducted during May-June 2019 by a team of three independent consultants, one international and two national. Detail methodology of this evaluation mandate is described in section 5.

This evaluation mainly focuses on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of a2i-ii project implementation, so that the findings of the review could be used for designing the next phase of the project. The analysis and recommendations made in this report is based on the consultation with various stakeholders, field visits, discussion with project staffs, studying various project documents and a number of evaluation reports of different programmes including TCV studies, the mid-term evaluation report and assessment studies of specific a2i initiatives. A list of the Project documents and reports that were reviewed by the current evaluation is available in Annex - III.

2. Situational Context – Citizens' Access to Public Services

Context of a2i and its relevance and synchronization with other Policies

Access to Information (a2i) as a project intervention is significantly linked with other policies, programs and plans of Bangladesh. Following Section provides with a brief narrative of the strategic and functional links between the a2i and other policy and program interventions.

i. Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021- Vision 2021

Vision 2021 along with other propositions strongly emphasized the need for improving the quality of service as well as the service delivery system. The vision statement therefore emphasized that adequate measures should be taken “to reform the existing regulations in the service delivery system of ministries and departments, and the agencies they manage”(p.18). Considering the importance of rural institutions, the vision statement strongly emphasized the need for creating a “viable platforms for service delivery, including rural financing”(p.33). The vision statement further underscored that all Union Parishad complexes should be so developed that they become “the focus of rural service delivery” (p.70) system as well.

The government of Bangladesh's underlying policy packages are linked to long term development goals defined under The Vision 2021 (otherwise known as the a perspective plan 2010-2021). To implement the perspective plan the government decided to formulate two 5- year plans, the Sixth Five Year Plan (FY2010-FY2015) and the Seventh Plan (FY2016- FY2020).

ii. 7th Five Year Plan:

The Plan emphasizes on policies, institutions and programs that support lowering income inequalities and empowering citizens. The plan recognizes the need for strengthening of inclusive institutions, ensuring pluralistic democracy, gender equality, social protection, citizen's empowerment. The 7FYP recognizes the concept of “Digital Bangladesh” as an inclusive vision “that is organic in nature and is driven from within”. The Plan, therefore, observed that the plan and development initiatives need to be bottom-up in nature, more should be done to involve grassroots, not just in the implementation but also in planning and prioritization” (p.2).

The Plan sets 23 targets under two interrelated components of the digital governance: (a) e-Administration, i.e., business process re-engineering of government agencies; and, (b) e-Citizen services, i.e., converting traditional service delivery into e-service delivery system to take “service at citizens’ doorsteps.” The Plan, therefore, focused on improving governance by increasing transparency, accountability and efficiency of service delivery and ensuring better value for money. The 7th Five Year plan recognized the need and importance of ICT as a tool to address the challenges of “service delivery, capacity, and accountability (p.507).

The FYP further endorsed the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) and noted that “this initiative alone could significantly and rapidly change the service delivery paradigm” and promote a “culture of transparency, accountability and responsiveness”.

iii. Bangladesh Awami League Election Manifesto 2018

The 2018 election manifesto of the Awami League (AL), titled “Bangladesh on the March towards Prosperity” promises the nation an efficient, service-oriented and accountable administration system. The manifesto reiterated the need for women empowerment and their engagement in mainstream development activities, especially, in rural areas. Most importantly the manifesto reiterates the commitments of the ruling party to translate the

“Dreams for Digital Bangladesh through Information and Communications Technology” to achieve the development goals including the SDG-1.

Keeping in view the state of the political economy and pace of development, the manifesto of ruling Party Awami League asserts the Party’s commitment to “alleviate poverty, create employment and, ensure service-oriented and accountable administration” among others.

iv. National ICT Policy 2009

The importance of science and technology in general, and of ICT in particular, has led the Government to formulate the National Science and Technology Policy and National ICT Policy 2009. The National ICT Policy 2009 has expressed its vision to move Bangladesh towards a poverty free middle-income prosperous country by 2021. Its vision includes plans to expand the information and communication technology, and then take advantage of this “to establish a transparent, committed and accountable government, develop skilled manpower, improve social justice and manage public services”. The ICT Policy has introduced a Service Innovation Fund to incubate innovation in promoting the quality of service delivery by re-engineering the system of delivery.

v. Digital Bangladesh

Digital Bangladesh vision aims at raising the quality of institutional efficacy, greater mobilization and better utilization of resources. In addition, the modern society that the Digital Bangladesh vision aspires, also requires fundamental reforms in governance structure which would significantly *upgrade public service delivery systems and make it responsive to citizens’ needs*. The vision is unique as it proposes *to mainstream ICTs as a pro-poor tool*. The vision demands a fundamental shift of mindset of the implementers.

vii. SDG tracker:

SDG and its 17 goals are now considered as the core planning principles and also a monitoring tool for member countries of the UN. General Economic Division (GED) of the Planning Commission has developed set guidelines to implement and monitor SDGs.

viii. Innovation scheme of Cabinet Division

The Cabinet Division has introduced an Innovation Work Plan and Evaluation Rules 2015. These rules have been formulated to regulate and evaluate the innovation schemes and different change models.

Implications on a2i

Policies and Program	Bearings and implications on a2i
<i>Perspective Plan of Bangladesh - Vision 2021</i>	Public services should be inclusive, gender sensitive, maintain social protection, and citizen’s empowerment to be recognized.
<i>7th Five Year Plan</i>	e-Administration, i.e., business process re-engineering of government agencies; and, e-Citizen services.
<i>Election Manifesto 2018</i>	Mainstreaming of gender perspectives, achieving SDGs, poverty alleviation, service-oriented and accountable administration.

Policies and Program	Bearings and implications on a2i
<i>ICT Policy</i>	Transparency and accountable government, improve social justice, and manage public service efficiently.
<i>Digital Bangladesh</i>	Upgrade public service delivery system, make it responsive to citizen's needs, pro-poor service delivery
<i>Annual Performance Agreement (APA)</i>	New service delivery paradigm – culture of transparency, accountability, responsiveness.
<i>Election Manifesto of Awami League</i>	Poverty alleviation, new employment, service oriented and accountable administration
<i>SDG tracker</i>	Design electronic tools for SDGs with specific indicators
Innovation Scheme of Cabinet Division	Innovation Work plan and installation of system to regulate and evaluate the innovation schemes and change models

All such policies and commitments are aligned with the project interventions of a2i. The policy frameworks for that matter have significantly accelerated the performance of a2i to empower civil servants with new innovative packages to address citizen-centric solutions. The collective implications of the supportive policies have helped A2i to scale up innovative interventions to provide door stop services. In the process a wide spectrum of stakeholders: like, entrepreneurs, teachers, youth, private sector, CSOs/NGOs have been inducted as partners and or beneficiaries of a2i innovations.

With such policy framework A2i has got a relative advantage to pursue its program and project interventions and also mainstream the culture of innovation. To enhance its institutional capacity, and with the technical assistance from a2i, the GoB has formed over a thousand innovation teams¹ steered and headed by a Chief Innovation Officers. A system of service delivery mechanism has been developed with the Service Innovation Fund (SIF) of BDT 800 million. A2i is also engaged with General Economic Division (GED) of the Planning Commission and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics to design the SDG Tracker in order to create a data repository for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs.

3. Abridged Narrative on Access to Information - II Project

The second phase of a2i project, in short, A2i-II started in 2012. The second phase was initially planned for 3 years (from April 2012 to March 2016) which was later extended up to June 2019 (started from April 2016). The objective of this extended period of the project is to “increase transparency, improve governance, and reduce the time, difficulty and costs of obtaining government services for under-served communities of Bangladesh.” The a2i Programme contributes to the following Outcome and Output areas of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF):

¹ Over 6,000 Innovation Team members at different tiers

Table 1: a2i Contribution to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

Outcome- 1	Inclusive and sustainable growth and development.
Outcome- 2	Develop and implement improved social policies and programmes that focus on good governance, reduction of structural inequalities and advancement of vulnerable individuals and groups.
CPD Output 1.1	The Government has knowledge and skills to better target remaining pockets of poverty and expands opportunities for women to contribute to and benefit from economic progress.
CPD Output 2.3	The Government can develop policies and carry out sectoral and geographical interventions in districts where inequality of progress is evident.

a2i's Theory of Change in the extended period is to be actualised in the course of five inter-related components of programmatic interventions:

- **Component 1:** Strengthening existing e-services and launching a second generation of integrated, inter-operable e-government applications; (e-Service)
- **Component 2:** Sensitizing government officials, training for service providers and expanding digital literacy among the general public; (Capacity and Awareness)
- **Component 3:** Forging strong policy and strategy links to ensure implementation of needed legal and regulatory changes in support of the project; (Enabling Environment)
- **Component 4:** Promoting innovation in the delivery of e-services; (Innovation), and
- **Component 5:** Establishing linkage with public and private sectors and creating awareness among the citizens.

Through proper implementation of these strategies a2i wants to contribute to the achievement of promised “Digital Bangladesh” and take government services to the doorsteps of the citizens. At present, the Innovation Lab+ of a2i drives the creation of a public service innovation ecosystem and delivery infrastructure. Now a2i Programme has unique, simple and powerful Innovation Lab+ model which turns around to:

- Cultivate ‘Empathy’
- Reduce ‘Time, Cost and Visit’
- Simplify through ‘Service Process Simplification’
- Support innovation through ‘Service Innovation Fund’
- Celebrate innovators with ‘Innovation Summit’
- Establish delivery platforms, enabling ‘Service for All’

Gender equality remains at the core of all a2i initiatives. Design of a2i phase-II covers the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Pillar 7 (“Gender Equality and Women’s Advancement”), Millennium Development Goal (MDG)- 3 (“Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women”), Gender concerns elaborated in the 7th Five-Year Plan of Bangladesh and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-5(Gender Equality).

Three key results that a2i wants to achieve are:

- Underserved communities have better and simplified access to the public services.
- Civil servants are more capable in providing transparent and effective services.
- Greater financial inclusion for the traditionally excluded citizen achieved through digital social safety net (SSN) and banking services

a2i collaborates with various stakeholders to achieve its goals. a2i has several national and international partners such as, MoU with CTO Forum Bangladesh for promoting technology awareness in Banks and corporate sectors, linking Financial Technology Experts and policies. Other partners of a2i include Edison Group/Symphony, Walton, GrameenPhone, Robi Axiata BD Ltd, Banglalink Digital Communication Ltd, UC browser, Ali Baba Group, ICT, LDG and KOICA, Bangladesh Betar, Institution of Diploma Engineers, Samsung India Electronics Pvt. Ltd, The International Labour Organization. Moreover, Partnership and collaboration with various countries like Peru, Singapore, Paraguay, Somalia, Philippines, Fiji, Bhutan and Maldives on various collaborated activities through UNDP and the South-South Network has functioned well towards enabling inclusive and sustainable development.

Activities of a2i have received a number of national and international recognitions, such as International Invention, Innovation & Technology Exhibition” (ITEX) Award 2018; WSIS Award 2018 (for Muktopath); WSIS Award 2018 (for Online Police Clearance Certificate Management System); UN South-South Cooperation Award 2018; President Award 2018 of Open Group and “Award of Merit” at 18th APICTA Award 2018; 3rd Commonwealth Digital Health Awards-2018 (Winner); ICT4D Award, WSIS Prize 2017 Winner, WSIS Prize 2017 Champion, President’s Award & Award of Distinction 2017, COMMWARD 2016, Public Administration Award 2016, WSIS Champion 2016, WSIS Prize 2015; WSIS Prize 2014, Manthan Award 2010; Manthan Award 2009 etc.

4. Objective and Scope of the End-line Evaluation Mandate

The End-line Evaluation of Access to Information – II programme is aimed at developing a clear and independent view on the programme performance and accomplishments; and to explore the ways of taking forward its accomplishments to make public services more inclusive, affordable, reliable and easier to access for underserved communities:

- Objective appraisal of the key results of a2i with special attention to the *relevance* and *effectiveness* of programmatic outcomes; *efficiency* of programme operation and *value-for-money* of the results obtained. The evaluation would also examine the sustainability and institutionalization of successful programmatic interventions and attempt documenting the innovations and key lessons learnt from the project. The review team would assess the program accomplishments at outcome level and to the extent possible at the impact level; and the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries affected by the accomplishment of intended results. Moreover the team will assess overall planned outcomes vis-a-vis actual results with reference to the program’s gender-specific goals.

- Examine the viable way forward in terms of future thematic orientations of a2i, specifically on institutionalizing innovation culture and digital service in government; leveraging Data revolution for strengthening good governance; and capacitating the youth with skills and abilities to mitigate the employment risk by the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

The Terms of Reference has specified a set of key questions to guide the End-line Evaluation as well on issues related to engendering the programme, which the External Review team tried exploring in detail and depth; and wherever required delved into additional issues related to these questions. These findings are narrated in the Section 6 of this document below.

5. Methodological Approach for the End-line Evaluation Mandate

5.1 The Framework and Methodologies Employed

The evaluation design has drawn upon the outcomes and indicators of most recent version of Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of a2i project; and also from the theory of change articulated in the Terms of Reference. The methodology was framed keeping in mind the need to pursue an objective appraisal that weighs-up the outcomes against programmatic inputs and interventions. In addition the evaluation framework tries looking into the contributions of a2i programme towards advancing ICT mediated governance reform and improving public sector performance in Bangladesh.

Mixed-Methods Evaluation approach, which provides a deeper understanding of why change is (or is not) happening, was applied for carrying out this mandate of appraising the performance and outcome of a2i programme. Additionally the mixed-methods evaluation approach has been instrumental in (i) capturing the unintended results of project implementation; (ii) exploring sustainability of project outcomes; and (ii) generating learning for the next trajectory of reform and innovation initiatives. In the context of end-line evaluation of a2i project, the mixed-methods approach involved:

- Conversational qualitative interviews with the representative of all key stakeholders of the programme: national level officials of the government, project implementation functionaries of a2i and UNDP, district and sub-district level officials, Union Parishad Chairpersons, UDC entrepreneurs, academic and research institutions, civil society and private sector partners of the project, and citizen beneficiaries. These conversational interviews were structured around a set of defined themes or topics directly related to the stakeholders' engagement with the programme;
- Focus Group Discussions to assess the benefits of the project interventions and to explore the areas where further programmatic investments might be required;

- Direct observation and assessment of project outputs in terms of programmatic interventions as well as digital products and e-services;
- Outcome Harvesting workshops/interactions with all key members of project team to frame and interpret outcome descriptions, understand the cause and effect of change interventions, and provide evidence-based answers on their significance in achieving and sustaining certain results. This was a two stage engagement process: (1) drafting, refining, and validating output and outcome descriptions as well as non-achievement of results of various project interventions; and (2) reflective brainstorming in respective project teams to analyse and interpret the validated outcome description to understand why they were able to achieve certain outcomes and how to sustain and build on these accomplishments, as well as what lessons could be derived from the efforts and interventions where they have not been able to achieve desired results.
- Iterative review of literature to concurrently study a2i Programme Documents, the Mid-Term Report, the Innovation Briefs, Results Framework, 7th Five Year Plan of GoB, UNDAF for Bangladesh, Annual plan and budgets, annual progress and expenditure reports, M&E Status updates, studies and publications related to a2i programme and all other relevant documentations.

The engagements within the remit of this evaluation mandate adhered to UNDP evaluation principles, norms and standards. The evaluation team ensured that UNDP guidelines for reviews and the UNEG “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” are complied with. The team had also made sure that the confidentiality of information provided during the course of evaluation interaction is respected and maintained.

5.2. Information Acquisition, Triangulation and Analysis

The conversational interviews and FGDs were conducted through a flexible set of exploratory questions within a defined framework for the respondents to express their views and understanding in their own terms. Adequate care was taken to look at issues holistically, so that rounded perspective from the responses could be developed around specific evaluation question.

Triangulation of gathered information to ensure that the results are linked up into a coherent and credible evidence base is a core principle in mixed-method evaluation approach; and as a principle, the evaluation team ensured that information, opinions and perspectives offered by respondents were validated against information gleaned from other sources and documents. Depending upon the context and validation needs, the evaluation team relied on *source triangulation* (comparing and collating information from different sources) and *method triangulation* (comparing information collected by different methods), as well as triangulated validation of evaluators’ perception on specific aspects and issues.

Findings and insights derived from the engagements and interactions as well as review of project literature and related documents were shared with UNDP in a debrief session as well

as in an interactive sharing session with Development Partners; and their comments and perspectives have been assimilated as input for the draft evaluation report.

5.3 Key Evaluation Questions Investigated

The Terms of Reference has specified the following set of key questions to guide the course of End-line Evaluation mandated and to closely look at issues related to engendering the programme:

- Access of underserved communities to public administrative services enhanced and simplified through electronic means
 - Was the project able to expand the range of accessible services for the underserved communities through e-services and simplification and digitization?
 - Was the project successful at on reducing time-cost-visits (TCV) for citizens through its e-service and simplification-digitization initiatives?
 - How successful was the project in ensuring affordable and easy access to online services for citizens through Union Digital Centres (UDC)?
- Awareness of citizens on availability of public e-services enhanced and capacity of civil servants and service providers strengthened to facilitate transparent and responsive services
 - Was the project successful at creating awareness and demand for e-services amongst the citizens especially from poor and underserved communities?
 - To what extent the project was able to enhance capacity and awareness among government officials at national and sub-national levels to facilitate effective services?
- Enabling legal and policy framework designed and partnerships established to facilitate responsive and transparent service delivery
 - How successful was the project at contributing to the full implementation of the National ICT Policy?
 - Was the project successful at influencing formation and reformation of policies to ensure the implementation of needed legal and regulatory changes in support of the project?
 - Was the project successful in developing partnerships with different public and private organizations to launch and operate e/m-Service delivery initiatives and develop ICT infrastructure?
- Institutional and incentive frameworks developed to promote innovative service delivery mechanisms
 - How successful was the project at capacity building initiatives to help with public service innovations within government?

- To what extent the project was able to contribute to advocating for relevant policies required for the institutionalization of public service innovations?
- Did the project's recognition and incentive mechanism successfully recognize and encourage innovation in public service delivery?
- Linkages established with public and private sectors and awareness created among the citizens
 - How successful was the project at overall awareness raising process of the project's interventions for the stakeholders?
 - What lessons were learned from the various partnerships, and what are the possibilities of broadening, deepening and sustaining partnerships for expansion of e-services?
- Objective assessment of program's gender strategy and the overall planned outcomes vis-à-vis actual results in reference to the program's gender-specific goals
 - Was the project able to accelerate the program towards human development and MDGs through the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment through its programmatic approaches and operationalization?
 - Was the project successful at empowering women entrepreneurs through its Union Digital Centres?
 - How successful was the program's Women Innovation camp initiative in achieving its goals?
 - How successful was the project's skills development initiative in terms of empowering women through their training efforts?
 - Was the program successfully able to reach its gender-specific target through its various initiatives?
 - To what extent have strategic gender needs of women and men been addressed through the project, and has this resulted in sustainable improvement of women's rights and gender equality?

These key evaluation questions have been encapsulated in the Evaluation Matrix developed for this purpose; the Matrix also provided an overview of the planned methodological approach and their implementation to seek answers of the evaluation questions:

Table 2: Evaluation Matrix: End-line Evaluation of Access to Information-II

Evaluation criteria	Key research question(s)	Required information and Data sources	Methods for data collection and analysis	Benchmark / indicators of success
Relevance	Are the project outcomes consistent with the UNDAF and national priorities, and did they remain	GoB and UNDP priorities as enunciated in SFYP, UNDAF, a2i project documents	Iterative review of literature and Key Informant Interviews	Evidence of a2i project output and outcomes contributing to realisation of

Evaluation criteria	Key research question(s)	Required information and Data sources	Methods for data collection and analysis	Benchmark / indicators of success
	relevant over time?	and periodic reports. Feedback and guidance from senior GoB functionaries.		stated priorities
Efficiency	Have a2i project managed to achieve best value for money (results delivered vs resources expended)?	Project results framework and annual budgets. Data sources would include project budgets, annual progress and expenditure reports, input from NPM and a2i programme teams, minute of PEB meetings, MTR report etc	Review of progress reports and related project documents; Key Informant Interviews; and Outcome Harvesting interactions	Beneficial value-for-money indicators justifying the economic case for project investments
Effectiveness	To which extent were the objectives achieved? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?	Project results framework and the outcomes reported (and appraised). Data sources would include quarterly and annual progress reports, perspectives of key informants, MTR report, appraisal of digital products and e-services, beneficiary feedback et. al.	Review of progress reports and related project documents; Key Informant Interviews; Outcome Harvesting interactions; and assessment of programmatic outputs and interventions	Evidences related to realisation of project objectives. Analytical insights related to the factors influencing the achievement of result
Impact	What has happened as a result of the project? Have intended outputs and outcomes been achieved?	Details on project results in terms of output and outcomes.	Review of progress reports and related project documents; Key Informant Interviews; Outcome Harvesting interaction; FGD with targeted stakeholders; and assessment of programmatic outputs and interventions	Evidences related to realisation of project objectives. Analytical insights related to the factors influencing the achievement of result

Evaluation criteria	Key research question(s)	Required information and Data sources	Methods for data collection and analysis	Benchmark / indicators of success
	Did project help expand the access of public services for underserved communities?	Region and gender disaggregated data on the use of a2i enabled e-services. To be accessed from project MIS; and validated with beneficiary feedback and assessment by MTR	Key Informant Interviews; FGD with targeted stakeholders; review of annual progress reports and project MIS; and Outcome Harvesting interactions	No of citizens from underserved communities benefiting from a2i enabled digital products and e-services.
	What are the immediate differences produced by the project's interventions?	Number of immediate beneficiaries, innovations mainstreamed, ministries and departments benefitting from a2i, contribution of the project in achieving MDGs and relevant SDGs in future.	Project documents, annual reports, earlier evaluation reports; consultation with stakeholders etc.	Achievements vis-à-vis targeted indicators,
Sustainability	Would the project-supported interventions continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after the project's completion if the current framework of implementation prevails?	Review of existing a2i documents for sustainability plan (if any); recent changes in government policies, laws which may have implications for sustainability of activities done by a2i; also potential future policy change.	Data and information received from the a2i; relevant policy documents of Bangladesh; discussion with different stakeholders during evaluation process and impression received from field visits.	Analysing the policies; insights from stakeholders' consultations
	How has the project influenced wider policy discourse at national (and international) level?	Details of a2i influenced policy processes in terms of legislative changes, gazette notifications, government orders, circulars et. al.	Review of relevant policy documents and legislations; annual progress reports of the project; and input from Key Informant Interviews, and	Evidences related to realisation of project induced policy reform.
Lessons Learned	What are the key innovations and lessons learned from the project?	Innovations in technology as well as public service delivery	Review of innovation briefs, process reform documentations	No. and types of innovation mainstreamed for improved public

Evaluation criteria	Key research question(s)	Required information and Data sources	Methods for data collection and analysis	Benchmark / indicators of success
		experimented / mainstreamed by a2i. Data Sources would be project documents, innovators' input, media reports, case-studies, publications etc.	and relevant literatures, consultative interviews with innovation practitioners, Outcome Harvesting interactions with a2i team	service. Evidence of virtuous spiral of systemic improvements from experiential learning of a2i implementation.
	What are the scope of improving project design, operation and management of a2i?	Implementation challenges and how these have been mitigated / addressed. Data source would be Project design document, annual reports, PEB meeting minutes, MTR recommendation, feedback from KIIs and FGD, interactions with project teams	Review of relevant literature, consultative interviews with Key Informants, inputs from FGD and Outcome Harvesting Interactions.	Identified areas of weakness in project design and implementation; recommended measures for improving project design.
Attainment of gender specific goals	Was a2i programme successful in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment	Implementation status of a2i Gender strategy and Gender action Plan; Gender outcomes reflected in various programme documents and statistics.	Implementation data and gender-specific staff information from the HR division of a2i; stakeholders consultations; various program documents provided by a2i	The gender composition of a2i staffs in different sections; yearly statistics on the indicators mentioned in the a2i Gender Action Plan and link that with a2i Gender Strategy.

5.4 Limitations of the Evaluation Framework

The evaluation framework of this mandate did not have a provision of Beneficiary Assessment interactions or surveys to assess the value of project activities and interventions as perceived by targeted beneficiaries; and had to rely entirely on commissioned reports and studies related to users' feedback. Dipstick validation of such perspectives was however attempted during field interaction at District and Upazila level. While those interactions reinforced the study findings, the sample size of direct interaction was too small to be statistically significant.

The planned FGDs with civil society and private sector partners are thinly attended; and actually became three way conversational interactions. In spite of repeated efforts, a2i team

could not meaningfully organise the requested FGDs. However the sharing session with the Development Partners was effective and in real term became a vibrant Focus Group Discussion. Even with these limitations, by repeated interactions with the a2i implementation teams and by consulting the above mentioned primary and secondary information, the evaluation team could come up with a number of interesting findings and lessons.

6. Key Findings – Assessment against Evaluation Framework

6.1 Programmatic Relevance and Results

The Access to Information (a2i) - II project aims to ensure that 20 million citizens from underserved communities derive benefit from easy access to simplified and digitized public service, reducing the difficulty, cost and time of obtaining these services. Towards realisation of this objective, the project pursued five inter-related approaches of programmatic interventions: (1) Strengthening e-service delivery and launching next generation of inter-operable, integrated e-government applications; (2) Capacitating public service providers, sensitizing government officials and expanding digital literacy among the general public; (3) Facilitating creation of an enabling environment with strong policy and strategy links with implementation; (4) Promoting innovation; and (5) Establishing public and private partnership and creating awareness among citizens.

The evidence gathered during the course of this evaluation, with support from result measurement instruments of the project, do point to positive achievements in each of these intervention approaches. Many a time the accomplishments on programmatic interventions have exceeded the output / outcome targeted; and it demonstrates the relevance of project design in relation to the attainment of its objectives.

With these achievements, the a2i project has significantly contributed in actualising the threefold strategy of UNDAF² to address the deficits of public administration and the challenges of public service delivery in Bangladesh. Further, as a project intervention, a2i is significantly linked with national policies, programs and plans of Government of Bangladesh; and its intervention strategies and outcomes are consistent with national and local priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries.

The 7th Five Year Plan (SFYP) aims at accelerating the “growth, empowering citizens”. The plan identifies strengthening of inclusive institutions, ensuring pluralistic democracy, gender equality, social protection, citizen’s empowerment. The SFYP recognizes the concept of “Digital Bangladesh” as an inclusive vision to involve people at the grassroots. The Plan also recognized the need and importance of ICT as a means to capacitate public sector for improved performance and to address the challenges of inclusive public service delivery. The policy framework enunciated in the National ICT Policy (2015), broadly sets the core

² The threefold strategy of UNDAF aims at

- a) improving institutional capacity of the civil service (output 1.4);
- b) promoting devolution and capacity of local government institutions (output 1.5); and
- c) improving administrative service delivery models leveraging technology (output 1.6)

objective of ensuring social equity, gender parity, equal opportunity and equitable participation in nation-building through access to ICTs for all. The policy regime further demands a new service delivery paradigm that is efficient, transparent, accountable, gender sensitive and supportive to empowering the citizen.

The Annual Performance Agreement (APA) – a new performance management system of the Ministries ensures that each Ministry has to launch a new electronic service every year. Innovation Work Plan and Evaluation Rules 2015 of the Cabinet Division have outlined a regulatory framework to evaluate the innovation schemes and change models of the ministries. Furthermore, the Election Manifesto 2018 of the ruling party Awami League also strongly emphasized that the “Dreams for Digital Bangladesh” could be achieved through information and communications technology and also would ensure service-oriented and accountable administration.

The policy paradigm has therefore been supportive and significantly accelerated the performance of a2i to explore the citizen-centric e-service solution and innovative packages with an aim to provide door stop services. The project has also contributed significantly across a range of policy reform interventions as well as legislative and regulatory changes in support of the project.

6.2 Efficiency and Value-for-money of Project Interventions

The efficiency of the a2i-ii project has been evaluated in terms of results delivered by various components of programmatic interventions in relation to the resources expended for implementing those programmes. The efficiency has also analysed the success of the interventions in to achieve the goals of reducing time, cost and visits for receiving various services.

Value of the Project Outcomes as against resource invested and additional investment leveraged / mobilised:

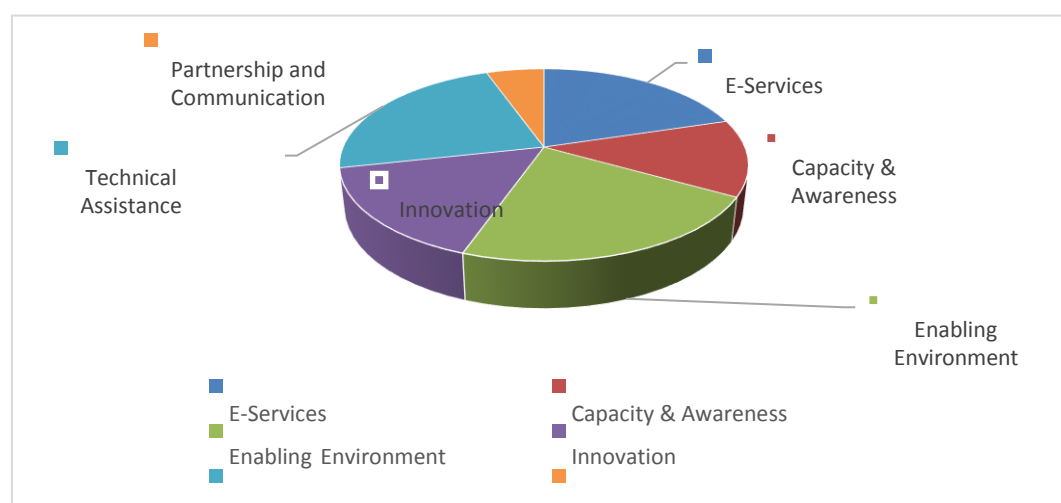
In this section we have presented targeted and actual performance of different activities/ outputs of the main five components of the project. Those are (i) e-Service, (ii) Capacity and Awareness, (iii) Enabling Environment, (iv) Innovation and (v) Creating linkage and awareness among the citizens (including technical assistance).

For 2012 to June 2019 period, a total of USD50.28 million was allocated for performing various activities under different components of a2i project. Out of this allocation USD18.6 million came from UNDP and USD31.72 million came from the Government of Bangladesh. Thus 63% of fund for a2i-ii project came from the GOB. Table 3 below presents component specific budget and expenditure since April 2012 to May 2019, reflecting more than 90% utilisation for each of the components. Highest level of budget utilisation is observed for the project interventions related to Enabling Environment (97.82%) and Partnership And Communication (97.93%). This indicates slightly over estimation of budget. Ratio wise GOB’s budget has been better utilized compared to the budget executed under UNDP.

Table 3: Utilisation of UNDP and GOB funded budget under a2i

Activity/ Output	Budget (USD) (April 2012 to June 2019)			Expenditure (USD) (From April 2012 to May 2019)			Rate of utilization of Budget (%)		
	UNDP	GOB	Total	UNDP	GOB	Total	UNDP	GOB	Total
E-Services	3,759,789	6,435,958	10,195,746	3,601,983	5,915,827	9,517,810	95.80	91.92	93.35
Capacity & Awareness	2,392,573	4,095,575	6,488,147	2,167,528	3,860,346	6,027,874	90.59	94.26	92.91
Enabling Environment	4,138,961	7,036,207	11,175,168	4,031,306	6,900,737	10,932,042	97.40	98.07	97.82
Innovation	2,992,740	5,122,934	8,115,674	2,734,017	4,780,055	7,514,072	91.35	93.31	92.59
Technical Assistance	4,265,017	7,300,800	11,565,817	3,983,944	6,769,664	10,753,608	93.41	92.72	92.98
Partnership and Communication	1,010,230	1,729,299	2,739,529	970,843	1,711,876	2,682,719	96.10	98.99	97.93
Sub total	18,559,310	31,720,772	50,280,082	17,489,621	29,938,505	47,428,126	94.24	94.38	94.33

As could be seen in Figure 1 below that the components of Technical Assistance and Enabling Environment are the two highest funded components under a2i.

Figure 1: Budget share of a2i-II Project Components (2012 to 2019)

Even though there was less than full utilisation of resources, expected output targets for most of the sub-components under output indicators of a2i have been achieved (Table 4). In many cases, achievements exceeded the target. For example for number of people availing e- services was 3% higher than the target. The number of services simplified was 6% higher than the target. The number of service providers trained / oriented to design and implement e- services was 22% higher than the target. The sub-components for which we observe weak performance include development of land related e-services and service access points; proportion of citizens using rural decentralized banking system; and development of new agency for service delivery innovation with establishment of a sustainable organizational model. Further reflective analysis could be undertaken by the project to better

understand the reasons for performance variations of certain project components vis-à-vis the others.

The programmatic efficiency in terms of actual achievements vis-à-vis project targets appears to be satisfactory. Sub-component-wise highest amount of resources were invested towards scaling-up of SIF project by relevant government offices (USD8.01 million accounting for nearly 17% of the spending under a2i project), and it resulted in 95% of the achievement of project target. On the other hand, the investment of USD6.18 million (13.03% of total project spending) towards provisioning of e/m-payment based social safety net services has resulted in 250% achievement³ against the target of this component.

Table 4: Efficiency Analysis on the Achievement of Different Project Components

Project Output Indicators	Baseline (Baseline Year)	Target (As on December 2018)	Achievement (till December 2018)	% Achieved vs Target (till December 2018)	Expenditure of a2i (2012 to 2018), in USD ⁴ (% of total expenditure)
Expected Output 01: Access of underserved communities to public administrative services enhanced and simplified through electronic means					
1.1 Number of beneficiaries availing e- Services	500,000 (2012)	3,800,000	3,921,000	103%	3,038,503 (6.41%)
1.2 Number of services simplified	270 (2015)	400	424	106%	4,817,792 (10.16%)
1.3 Number of e- services under Land Information and Service Framework	2 (2015)	7	4	57%	2,611,373 (5.51%)
1.4 Number of land related e-services provided from service access points	1 (2015)	7	4	57%	1,840,929 (3.88%)
Expected Output 2: Awareness of citizens on availability of public e-services enhanced and capacity of civil servants and service providers strengthened to facilitate transparent and responsive services.					
2.1 Number of service providers trained/oriented to design and implement e-services	3,000 (2015)	17,000	20,669	122%	3,967,103 (8.36%)
2.2 Number of 'Innovation Prototypes' initiated/ completed/ scaled-up by the government officials	300 (2015)	1,300	1,458	112%	3,828,249 (8.07%)
Expected Output 03: Enabling legal and policy framework designed and partnerships established to facilitate responsive and transparent service delivery					
3.1 Number of policies, rules and technical standards related to e- service delivery adopted	13 (2015)	25	22	88%	2,453,174 (5.17%)
3.2 Number of e/m- payment enabled government service	2 (2015)	10	10	100%	2,378,557 (5.02%)

³ Against the target of provisioning been spent for providing e/m-payment based social safety net services to 20% the 50% of targeted underserved citizens, the project has managed to reach 50% of underserved citizens.

⁴ The total expenditure for each output does not match with the total expenditure mentioned in table 6.1 as there are overlapping expenses for sub-components of different outputs.

Project Output Indicators	Baseline (Baseline Year)	Target (As on December 2018)	Achievement (till December 2018)	% Achieved vs Target (till December 2018)	Expenditure of a2i (2012 to 2018), in USD ⁴ (% of total expenditure)
3.3 TCV required for G2P and P2G fund transfer for specific services	T=4.5 Hrs. C=76BDT V=1.2 (2015)	50% TCV will reduce	57% reduction in TCV	114%	3,124,725 (6.59%)
3.4 Proportion of underserved citizens receive e/m- payment for social safety net services	0 (2012)	20%	50%	250%	6,181,051 (13.03%)
3.5 Proportion of citizens using rural decentralized banking system	0 (2012)	25%	12%	48%	--
Expected Output 04: Institutional and incentive frameworks developed to promote innovative service delivery mechanisms					
4.1 New agency for service delivery innovation with a sustainable organizational model established	0 Step (2012)	3 Steps	2 Steps	67%	250,245 (0.53%)
4.2 Number of projects funded through Innovation Fund	62 (2015)	220	209	95%	1,454,253 (3.07%)
4.3 Proportion of SIF project scaled-up by relevant government offices	1 (2015)	20	19	95%	8,012,831 (16.89%)
4.4 Number of underserved citizens benefitted from SIF prototypes	72,000 (2015)	1,000,000	1,220,000	122%	--
Expected Output 05: Linkages established with public and private sectors and awareness created among the citizens					
5.1 Average distance to service accessible points from citizen (in KM)	5.5 (2013)	4	4	100%	543,796 (1.15%)
5.2 Number of service access points established	5,275 (2015)	5,500	5,286	96%	796,308 (1.68%)
5.3 Number of services accessed from services access points, e.g., UDCs (Per Month)	4,500,000 (2015)	6,500,000	6,500,000	100%	1,278,890 (2.70%)
5.4 Proportion of citizens satisfied to the service access points	33% (2015)	50%	61%	122%	850,346 (1.79%)

In terms of generating three key results by various activities and associated spending by the a2i project, along with the use of additional funds leveraged by a2i project activities, the following achievements have been made:

Table 5: Achievement against Three Key Results: At a glance

Key Results (2018)	Achievements (Till December 2018)
1. Underserved people have better and simplified access to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 150 million underserved people have access to public services compared to 100 million in last year. The average distance of service accessing points has been

Key Results (2018)	Achievements (Till December 2018)
public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced to 4 kilometers which is similar to the target. 87% of citizens have been found satisfied to get service from the service access points 1 million beneficiaries received prompt, reliable and high-quality e- Mutation service. 36 Upazila (Sub-district) Land Offices transformed to provide 100% e- Mutation services to citizens. 1.1 Million under-served citizens have benefitted from 4 up-scaled SIF projects.
2. Civil services are more effective, faster and inclusive that enables Innovation Eco-system for building a strong institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400 services (cumulative) have been simplified. Seven e-Services under Land Information and Service Framework have been introduced whereas the target is 8. 17,000 service providers (3,602 in 2018) have been trained to design and implement e-services against the target of 17,000 1,300 'Innovation Prototypes' (617 in 2018) have been completed by the government officials. 52K+ government officers have been trained on the e-Filling system. 3,493 government offices have been using e-Filling system.
3. Greater financial inclusion for the traditionally excluded citizen achieved through digital social safety net (SSN) and banking services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% underserved citizens have received e/m-payment for social safety net services. 25% of citizen using rural decentralized banking system against the target 25%. 57% TCV required for G2P and P2G fund transfer for specific services. 30 million beneficiaries get access to Agent Banking services from Digital Centres. 235,355 Bank account were opened through Agent Banking in 2018; BDT 8.6 Billion transactions were made in 2018; the number of transactions made were 691,808 in 2018.

Source: Annual Progress Report 2018

As has been noted in the project document a2i works as a catalyst for promoting innovations, simplifying services and service delivery points. The initiatives taken by a2i leveraged additional resources (budgetary allocations / externally aided project funds of other Ministries and Divisions, private sector investments as well as non-monetised resources) from different sources, which actually helped to achieve the outputs mentioned above. The Evaluation team was provided with the details of these leveraged resources for the year 2017 and 2018 (Table 6), which stand at USD 217 million i.e. around 4.5 times of the total project expenditure during Phase-II implementation of a2i.

Table 6: Leveraging of additional resources for accomplishment of project outputs

SI	Project Output Indicators	Yearly Total: 2017 (BDT)	Yearly Total 2018 (BDT)
1	Access of underserved communities to public administrative services enhanced and simplified through electronic means	219,851,000	128,226,400
2	Awareness of citizens on availability of public e-services enhanced and capacity of civil servants and service providers strengthened to facilitate transparent and responsive services	14,394,315,000	1,963,395,600
3	Enabling Legal and policy framework and partnership are in place to facilitate responsive and transparent service delivery	24,700,000	21,019,868
4	Institutional and incentive frameworks developed to promote innovative service delivery mechanisms	85,500,000	27,855,652
5	Linkages established with public and private sectors and awareness created among the citizens	1,690,000	446,563,535
	Total	14,726,056,000 (USD186,170,114)	2,587,061,055 (USD31,511,097)

Note: Exchange rate for 2017 is considered to be 79.1 Taka/ USD and for 2018 it was 82.1/ USD (source: Bangladesh Economic review, 2018, Ministry of Finance)

Assessing the efficiency of the a2i-ii project on the basis of TCV analysis

A major component of programmatic interventions of a2i is to adopt internet or mobile based service delivery system. The main aim for this is to improve efficiency of service delivery in terms of time required for accessing a service, cost incurred by the service seeker and number of visits those need to be made to receive the service manually. Alam, M Jahangir (2012), noted that the e-governance system increases efficiency, and accountability of government and e governance is necessary to improve the service delivery to the people. The TCV analysis is a rapid assessment to provide evidence of any measurable reduction in time, cost or visit in accessing the electronically transformed public services compared to their manual counterparts. The TCV analysis may also be applied to understand efficiency of any change in service delivery system. For example, getting various services from a single place like the UDC compared to visiting different (often distant) places for different services. The analysis also provides citizens' perception about the advantages and disadvantages of both the electronic as well as manual systems, and capture their recommendations to further improve the service.

a2i has conducted TCV analyses for 85 services. Findings from the studies indicate that till 2017, various a2i initiatives for simplification of services, innovative new service delivery systems have resulted in a savings of 1.2B persons days, USD 4.7 billion cost and 627 million visits. On an average 4.18 person days, USD 16.37 cost and 2.18 visits were saved per service. For example, it is documented that through G2P and P2G fund transfer, the social safety net beneficiaries have saved 4.5 hours, BDT 76 and 1.2 visits which amounted to a total of 57% reduction in TCV. Similarly Average time reduced for birth registration has declined by 37%(82 min to 52 min) in UDCs. Similarly, average cost reduced by 24% in

UDC birth registration service than others service centres; and there was 21% reduction in average visits required in UDC birth registration service compared to the service delivery by other service centres. Findings of TCV analysis for select a2i initiatives are presented in Annex-IV. The savings of time and cost from various initiatives have been mentioned in Table 7.

Table 7: Savings of time and money as a result of various initiatives under a2i

Types of services	Saving of Time (in minutes or days for every beneficiary)	Saving of cost (in Taka for every beneficiary)
Citizen Certificate Service from Union Digital Center	42 minute	12
Birth Registration Service from UDC	30 minute	17
Land e-porcha service from UDC	12 days	646
Land Office Automation System at Jessore	46 minute	11,204
Agricultural Service Provided By UDC	44 minute	40
Simplification of Trade License Process from Municipality	10 days	614
The Use of technology for returning registered original documents	6252 minute	4,458
Mobile Link, Safe Maternity and Shining Family	147 minute	1,271
Aparazita Jessore	26 minute	5,748
Water Bill & Municipal tax Payment through Online & Mobile at Jhenaidah	4 minute	0.8
Livestock Service through SMS	64 minute	338.17
Digital Health Service	58 minute	75
SMS Based Certification before Marriage Registration to Stop Child Marriage	59 minute	41

These TCV analysis studies demonstrate that “Land e-Porcha service from UDC” and “Simplification of Trade License Process from Municipality” has seen the greatest improvement in saving time, which is 12 days and 10 days respectively. With regard to saving in cost for accessing a service, “Land Office Automation System at Jessore” and “Aparazita Jessore” has seen the large improvement in saving cost, Taka 11,204 and 5,748 respectively. One thing to note is that two of the most cost-efficient services are getting implemented in Jessore.

6.3 Programme Effectiveness

6.3.1 Achievement of Individual Outcomes attributed to the Project

Access to Information (a2i) programme entered its second phase in 2012 to address the deficits of the public administration system and public service delivery in Bangladesh. In

Phase II, the focus of the programme has been expanded from mere ensuring access to information to improving public service delivery through ensuring increased transparency, improved governance through innovation and capacity building within the civil service.

In broader perspective a2i as a public sector institutional and process reform initiative has been successful to a great extent from at least two broader perspectives: (a) a2i has been able to develop an innovation culture within the public administration system and among the civil servants; (b) a2i has been able to create wider awareness and sensitivity as regards e-governance among the top-ranking policy makers and this has been extended to the line managers at various tiers of Government of Bangladesh. The programme also facilitated some top-ranking public officials to be sensitized about the need for e-services and it has established a network of “reform champions” or a “guiding change coalition” in order to make public sector reform successful.

a2i has also been deeply engaged in promoting an innovation culture among the public officials at various levels, including the senior policy makers. Within the broad policy framework of the government like vision 2021, Seventh Five Year Plan, Digital Bangladesh, the project has been able to adopt and promote an inclusive bottom-up service delivery approach.

As a result, opportunities have been created for the field level officials of various ministries to use their experiences to develop innovative approaches of service delivery. This, in turn, triggered the bottom up demand side of quality service delivery. The creation of such demand has also made the civil servants more accountable and responsive to the need of the service seekers.

Empathy training has introduced a new culture of innovation and responsiveness among the civil servants. It has changed the mindset of the civil servants to put the citizen at the centre in initiating any service delivery innovation. The empathy training has put the civil servants on “citizens’ shoes” and help them develop a critical eye to question and scrutinize the service delivery system. In effect, this has significantly helped to unfreeze the typical bureaucratic mindset of the civil service in Bangladesh.

6.3.1.1 Component based output and outcome

National Portal

One of the significant contributions of the a2i is the design and activation of the National Portal, which is considered to be one of the world’s largest public website integrating about 46,500 public offices, 72,970 trained officials and around 494 public services. Under National Portal Framework (NPF), a2i facilitated the design of 27,488 websites for the ranges of public agencies starting from the lowest administrative tier (Union Parishad) to the highest (Ministry) level. The features and the coverage of Bangladesh National Portal include: 2,255,000+ web based contents accessed by an average 9 million visitors per month generating over 33 million page-views every month. 71,000+ trained officials are engaged to update the contents of National Portal and the websites developed in alignment with NPF.

There are over 267 face book pages and group e-mail hubs are active for problem mitigation purposes.

A number of studies reveal that the portal has reduced hassle, time and costs incurred by the citizens in accessing government services. However, there are concerns that the overall coverage of public services by the National Portal is still un-documented and it is currently more centred around information provisioning rather than being service centric.

An external review observes that more than 1.5million users are enjoying e-services with 90 million hits per month⁵. The study observes the following impacts of the Portal on the life and livelihood of the citizens: a. the Portal has reduced hassle, time and costs incurred by the citizens in accessing government services; b. drawing data from the PMO and a2i, the study further observers that the broad impacts on citizens' life and livelihood are as follows: i. the Portal has reduced the required time for accessing services from 30 days to 16 days, also the transaction cost has gone down from USD 3.3 to USD 1 and the number of visits reduced from 5 to zero⁶, ii. The Portal is mobile-friendly and about 70% mobile penetration and over 80% of internet access takes place over mobile phones – indicating greater access to information for the people, iii. A comparative study reveals that the National Portal has reduced 94% of time and cost required to obtain service than before.⁷ However, there are as high as 78.09% of services still manually served and only 21.9% services are being provided digitally. This indicates that there is still a considerable scope for further extension of the e-services.

Union Digital Centre (UDC)

One of the a2i's flagship initiatives is the Union Digital Centres (UDCs), one-stop service outlets located at Union Parishad with the objective of bringing services closer to the citizens, particularly the underserved communities. In fact, the UDCs are located with about 4 km from the average rural citizen's home; and are designed for operation by two local entrepreneurs: 1 male and 1 female under the overall supervision of the Union Parishad. However, statistics made available to the Evaluation team seem to indicate that an overwhelming (73%) UDC entrepreneurs are male; and this pattern is corroborated in the 2017 study conducted by the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka.

The UDCs are delivering 150+ services⁸, both public and private, to more than 36 million citizens at a much lower TCV for obtaining these services than before. UDC is basically an example of government to private/community and also a central to local government partnership model. Leveraging centralised ICT platforms such as Ek-Sheba, Ek-Shop, e-Challan, Agent Banking, MFS *et. al.*, the UDCs have been providing both free and fee based public services, like land records, birth and death registration, Citizen Certificate, telemedicine, online submission of application for passport, application to universities; and

⁵KOICA, e-Government Master Plan for Digital Bangladesh, 2018

⁶PMO (2018) National Portal, Innovation Brief, a2i, PMO, Dhaka.

⁷a2i annual review 2016.

⁸ The breakdown of services at UDC: 69 government services, 80 private services and more than 10 banking and financial services

private services like mobile financial services, electricity bill payments, internet browsing, sending e-mails, photocopying etc. to the rural citizens.

Impacts and Coverage

A total of 5312 Digital Centres running in the country have been providing 6.5 million services per month using centralised ICT platforms such as Ek-Sheba, Ek-Shop, e-Challan, Agent Banking, MFS et. al. to integrate all public, private, financial and ecommerce services. Various studies show that UDCs have helped reduce Time, Cost and Visit (TCV) by an average 57% for obtaining services. For instance, a recent study⁹ done by a2i team noted that on an average e-Porcha service has saved Time by 59% (12 days) cost by 82% (BDT 646) and visits by 25% (01 visit). Furthermore about 30 UDCs provide telemedicine via Skype. Another study¹⁰ finds that the income of the local entrepreneurs indicates an increasing trend, which is indicative of the potential of financial sustainability and increasing popularity of UDCs as the service access points for the rural people. The most important aspects of the UDC are that by now it is recognized as a door step service delivery platform and has extended provision of service to the under-served areas of rural Bangladesh.

Despite the increasing popularity and potential of the UDCs, its financial sustainability seems to be a challenge. Besides, the selection of entrepreneurs has also been questioned. The relationship between the entrepreneurs and the UP Chairperson and the Secretary in many cases are not harmonious. The roles and engagements of the female entrepreneurs have also found to be minimal and in many cases symbolic.

One of the primary focuses of a2i is on ensuring accountability and transparency in the public service delivery process. e-Service provision, in particular, is contributing enormously to public service accountability and transparency. Reduction of the TCV provides credible testimony of substantive changes in inclusive service delivery process and at a nominal cost. As such UDC brought the rural dwellers under the wider overall inclusive service delivery framework. Table 8 below presents how UDCs brought differences in performance of some of the selected services of the UDC:

Table 8: TCV Analysis of various UDC Services

Services	Before UDC			After UDC		
	Time(Hrs)	Cost(USD)	Visit	Time(Hrs)	Cost(USD)	Visit
Birth Registration	211.52	1.6	2.19	7.58	0.9	1.23
Citizen Certificate	24.9	0.7	1.71	2.97	0.5	1.07
Exam Registration	6.27	1.2	1.07	2.3	0.2	1.03
Death Registration	39.39	1.9	2.5	4.52	0.6	1.09
Photocopy	5.55	0.9	1.14	0.49	0.2	1.01

⁹ Quarterly Progress Report (Jan-March) 2018 a2i.

¹⁰ Quarterly Progress Report April-June, 2018 a2i.

Services	Before UDC			After UDC		
	Time(Hrs)	Cost(USD)	Visit	Time(Hrs)	Cost(USD)	Visit
Computer Compose	16.84	1.5	1.44	0.63	0.5	1.02
Photography	39.7	1.6	1.82	1.36	0.4	1.04
Internet Browsing	3.02	1.7	1.28	0.53	0.4	1.02
Electricity Bill Payment	4.31	0.9	1.21	0.343	0.2	1
Job Search	12.47	2.6	1.5	0.75	0.7	1

Field evidences and the a2i documents suggest that 5300+ Union Digital Centres have significantly facilitated the access and use of the selected public services the UDCs. In effect UDCs have emerged as a “trust-worthy” service delivery outlet catering to relevant and important services at the doorstep of the people. Within a maximum distance of 4 Km, UDCs have shown its promise and potential to reach the under-served communities; and studies indicate a significant reduction of time (85%), cost (63%) and visits (40%) for accessing services; and introduction of the agent banking system at UDC has now enabled easy access of financial services to underserved communities. The number of beneficiaries availing e-services at UDCs has grown from 0.5 million in 2012 to more that 3.9 million in 2018. Most importantly, local KIs noted that UDCs have significant potentials to cater to the different services being provided by the private sector agencies/enterprises. Thereby the UDCs could be an effective lynchpin between the under-served areas and the mainstream economy.

Challenges

In spite of the relevance and potential demand of UDCs, there are certain areas of improvement: improved internet connectivity and speed, uninterrupted electricity supply, upgraded equipment and skilled manpower. Financial sustainability of UDCs also seems to have some challenges. Most important one is the financial viability. The UDCs are now classified into five categories (A-E). Where ‘A’ category UDCs fall into the highest monthly income range of Tk.20,000, while the ‘E’ category corresponds to the lowest and unsustainable range of income i.e Tk.1000-5,000 per month. The internal report of a2i reveals that income wise, the majority of the UDCs (around 40%) still fall under ‘E’ category.

Moreover, the quality of service delivery and beneficiary satisfaction as regards the UDCs is a critical and important concern. The 2018 quarterly evaluation report of a2i reveals that on an average 50% of the citizens are satisfied with the UDC services while females are less satisfied (57%) than males (61%). An independent study of a TIB (2017)¹¹observers that people are least satisfied at the publicity of UDC (27.1%) and disclosure of information on UDC (37.1%).

¹¹ TIB (Transparency International Bangladesh) (2017), Union Digital Centres (UDCs) in delivering services: Roles, Potentials and Challenges, Dhaka.

Even with these evident weaknesses, the UDCs, with relevant improvisations, carry the potential of becoming unified channel for delivering digital service (and products) of government as well as private sector at the grassroots. This could possibly be achieved with strengthening (and improvising) the organisational, regulatory and operational management aspects of UDCs.

e-Nothi /e-Filing

e-Nothi /e-filing system is a G2G service which aims to improve the functional processes for speedier decisions, specially filing, communication, information dissemination and notification. It also aims to expedite the delivery of public services and quickly deal with the complaints. The e-Nothi has been created in line with the Secretariat Instructions-2014 for cutting down the unnecessary paper works and tiers of authority. e-Nothi has helped track the 'choke-point' of file movement; and as a result the average time for decision making on file has been reduced from 5-7 days to 1-2 days. Most importantly, e-Nothi creates a transparent process whereby both the service recipients and service providers have access to the system through any website of National Portal (www.bangladesh.gov.bd) or 'Nothi' (www.nothi.gov.bd).

Coverage and Impact

So far, the e-Nothi /Filing system has been implemented in more than 5,000 offices with around 63,000 active users to deliver government services from the ministry offices to the citizens' doorstep. It has facilitated ease of service access to citizens by e-enabling 185 citizen centric services of district administration as well as various ministries and divisions. Government plans to extend the reach of e-Nothi system at all levels so that the applications for all govt. offices can be submitted online; and this is expected to get implemented within 2019. e-Nothi system has been used to dispose off more than 2.5 million files during 2018 serving an estimated 4 million citizens.

The introduction of the e-Nothi system has widened the scope for the citizens to submit applications online, lodge complaints, check the progress and communicate with the government electronically with significant reduction in time and costs of accessing service.

Challenges

With 63,000 active users, e-Nothi system has demonstrated its capability of robust and scaled deployment. But compared to the volume of government offices and functionaries this base of active users is still very low (21% in June 2018) and would require effective interventions to enhance the adoption rate of e-Nothi system.

e-Mutation

Land mutation indicates land ownership. Mutation is done to record any update/change of the ownership of land. To get this done, the rural people used to travel to the Upazila Land office multiple times and had to incur considerable amount of expenses. To make the

traditional cumbersome and time-consuming process of land mutation faster and hassle free, accountable and transparent, a2i has introduced e-Mutation system in 300+ Land Offices to provide 100% e-Mutation services to 1 million citizens¹². The programme targets to replicate it country-wide by the end of 2019. Beyond e-Mutation, three other e-Services under Land Information and Service Framework have been introduced so far.

Coverage and Impact

Through e-Mutation system now any citizen can apply for mutation and track the status of his/her application from home/ abroad through any digital centre or tool from the link:<https://land.gov.bd/>. Internal study undertaken by the a2i, noted that e-Mutation has reduced time by 50%, number of visits have been reduced by 3 to 1 and about 0.45 million people have been benefitted.

The electronic system has also expedited the disposal system. So far, 1023 offices in 112 Upazilas have introduced e-Mutation system. By using this system, employees of the district land offices and local offices are able to settle any mutation-‘Jami-kharij’ case easily by the automated method. Other than that, senior officials can monitor all the related activities through dashboards.

Challenges

Currently, the system is project based and sustainability and replication of the e-Mutation depend on the ownership of the system by the Ministry of Land and Land Reform Board, it has not yet been done.

G2P (Government to Person) Payment System

In order to make the payment system of the Social Safety Net Program more efficient and beneficiary-friendly, government, for the Digital Financing Services DFS Lab+, a joint initiative of a2i and the Bangladesh Bank launched a pilot project called G2P (Government to Person) Payment System. The new payment system aims to make six major Social Safety Net allowances hassle-free, efficient and being delivered through the UDC instead of the nearest bank – which is almost always far away. The prime purpose of the initiative is to develop a system of financial inclusion of the poor and the un-banked citizens and also increase speed, security, transparency, and cost efficiency of Safety Net Programs.

Coverage and Impact

A study commissioned by a2i and the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP) found that beneficiaries save about 58% in time, 30% of the cost and a reduction of 80% in the number of visits to government. The number of bank accounts opened by the rural poor in the project areas has increased significantly to 384,030. Another a2i has piloted National

¹² While more than 250,000 e-Mutation applications were received, only around 60% of these applications were disposed through the electronic system.

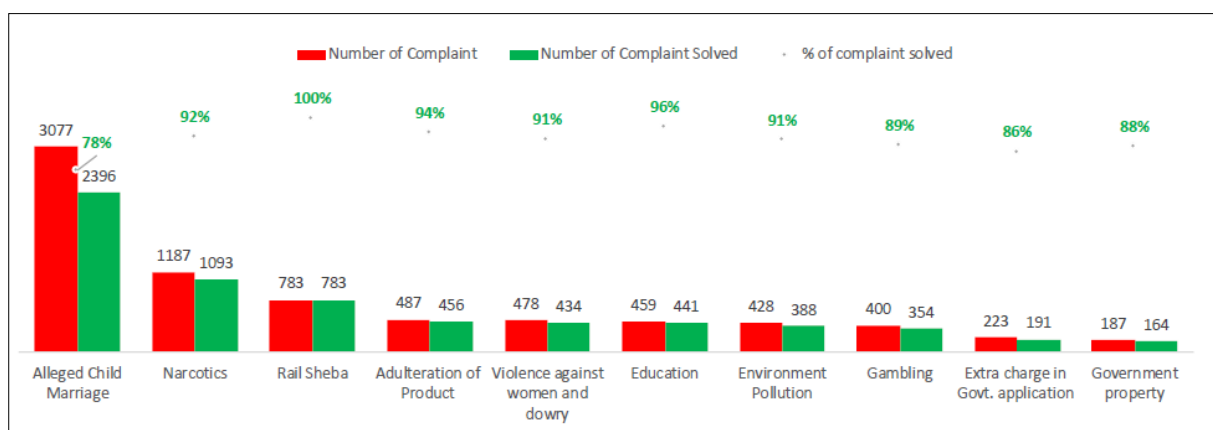
ID enabled digital payment system initiative electronic fund transfer through 115,086 bank accounts where female beneficiaries are larger than the male beneficiaries.

Challenges

The demand side of the digitization of social safety net payment is still weak. Most importantly limited number of banks are participating in an agent banking system in rural areas for the payment of safety net allowances.

333 Call Centre

Launched in April 2018, in partnership with Robi the private sector telecom operator, more than 2.5 million citizens accessed the 333 Citizen Call Centre to seek on public services as well as information available on the National Portal. Citizens can also use the call-centre channel to solicit remedy / rederssal of their social problems such as child marriage, violence against women, food adulteration, narcotics abuse etc. The figure below depicts the top 10 complaint categories and their resolution status:



It is however worthwhile to mention that of the total calls made, 89% of the callers are male reflecting a huge social disparity with regard to information access. This discouraging trend can also be seen in top 10 categories of the complaints made: only 11% complainants are women which seems to indicate that either (i) women fear to make a complaint owing to societal constraints; or (ii) they have limited knowledge of 333 service. a2i might consider conducting a comprehensive socio-ethnic research to better understand this gender related societal inhibition.

Multimedia Classroom (MMC)

In order to improve the quality and effectiveness of education, a2i introduced the Multimedia Classrooms (MMCs) initiative leveraging ICT at the primary and secondary education. Multimedia Classrooms use a multimedia projector, internet, and other traditional equipment for making the teaching environment more attractive and motivational to students.

Coverage and Impacts

Currently, there are over 23,331 multimedia classrooms in secondary schools and an additional 15,000+ at the primary level with more in the pipeline (PMO, 2018)¹³. Around 9.5 million students are enjoying the benefits of MMC in Bangladesh (Annual review report a2i, 2016). Most importantly, it has helped reduce the digital divide, educational divide, and enhanced the quality of teaching with ICT based skill. The Teachers' Portal (www.teachers.gov.bd) serves as an online platform for teachers across the country to share digital educational materials covering a wide variety of disciplines. 343,254 teachers were registered on Teachers' Portal as on December 2018¹⁴. The a2i internal review (a2i Annual Review report, 2016) observed that : teaching quality and skill have improved by 34% and 78% respectively; students interest in learning increased by 27%, Class attendance and participation increased by 67% and 57% respectively.

Challenges

Poor electricity supply and inadequate infrastructure facilities and lack of interest among a section of the teachers including the head teachers, and management committee tend to discourage the initiative.

To summarise,

1. ***a2i has been able to inculcate an innovation culture within the civil service*** and through this it has sensitized the top-ranking officials about the need for e-services and has established a network of “reform champions” or a “guiding coalition” in order to make public sector reform successful.
2. ***a2i has adopted an inclusive, bottom-up approach for promotion of innovation culture with a view to exposing the field level officials to the valuable experiences of innovation*** for different ministries, which also triggers further demands among citizens, putting pressure on government officials to deliver additional services.
3. ***a2i has emerged as an influential entity for policy advocacy***: a2i has played a significant role as an “influencer” entity for policy advocacy at the government level. a2i remains active in playing policy advocacy role for designing policies/ regulations/ guidelines related to ICT and non-ICT based services sometimes through drafting the policies/rules/guidelines and sometimes through providing technical advice. So far, the programme has influenced the forming /reforming of 39 policies and laws to implement its products which have eventually created a positive impact on achieving the national visions and plans.
4. ***External recognition***: As a consequence of the policy regimes, acts, rules and regulatory frameworks, Bangladesh has significantly moved forward in the E-Government

¹³ PMO(2018) Public Service Innovation Lab+: Empowering the whole of government and society to create a better Bangladesh, Dhaka.

¹⁴ The proportion of women teachers registered on the portal was 28%

Development Index of the United Nations due to the development in information-communication technology sector over the last few years. Bangladesh has moved up nine steps in the E-Governance Development Index while it progressed 33 steps in the E-Participation Index. Bangladesh secured the 115th place among 193 countries in the E-Government Development Index or EGD Index scoring 0.4862 and 51st place in E-Participation or EPI with a score of 0.8034. Bangladesh scored 0.7847 in online service delivery, 0.1976 in telecommunication infrastructure and 0.4763 in human capital index making the total score?

6.3.2 Flagship Innovations Initiated and Mainstreamed

a2i has introduced a number of e-services having bearing on the livelihood of the citizens. It has increased transparency, improved governance and quality public services and reduced inefficiencies. In short – a2i has laid the foundation of transparency, accountability and predictability of the public service delivery system.

Based on the secondary data, KI interviews, harvesting workshop, document reviews, field observations and experiences, the following component wise observations have been drawn:

Component 1: e-Services

Simplified government services have been made available for citizens; and it has resulted in reduced TCV. Average 6.4 million e-services (of 106 types) delivered per month to citizens through 5312 Digital Centers. Total 223.19 million services delivered with an average of 4.5 million beneficiaries per month. However, it is to be noted that some of these services are not necessarily e-Services in real sense¹⁵.

Land record digitisation has been completed for around 90% of acreage (under a Land Ministry project). This has been leveraged by a2i to enable 4 e-Services (like e-application for remote access of land records, e-Mutation, e-Inheritance management, and electronic registration of land deeds). All such new innovations have significantly changed the overall process and practices of land management system and have made the complicate land management hassle and corruption. However it is now only confined to the pilot project covered areas and yet to be mainstreamed.

National Portals are functional and widely used. On an average 1.5 million users are getting e-services with about 90 million hits per-month. Furthermore there are 27,488 web –sites of the public agencies starting from Union Parishads to Ministries.

Electronic file processing solution (e-Nothi) has initiated a speedier decisions and responsive office system. As of on December 2018, more than 4300 offices are using e-Nothi with around 56,000 active users. e-Nothi system has been used to dispose off more than 2.5

¹⁵ An e-Service in real sense will include (1) electronic submission and acceptance of citizens' applications services; (2) automated electronic transmission of citizens' applications to the concerned office; (3) rule-based electronic workflow for processing of the service applications; and secure electronic delivery of digitally authenticated documents delivered at UDC and/or downloaded from the portal.

million files during 2018 serving an estimated 4 million citizens. The services under e-Nothi fulfil the requirements of real e-Service to a significant extent, and GoB should urgently consider mainstreaming the process of issuing digitally signed documents and certificates.

Component 2: Capacity and Awareness

A new innovation culture for the public administration system has been institutionalized. For each Ministry, a Chief Innovation Officer at the Additional Secretary level has been appointed. Similarly each line agency and even at the district level an officer is assigned to follow up innovation schemes. Different ministries have designated a e-governance focal point to undertake internal monitoring and support institutionalize the e-governance practices. There are field based evidences of enhanced capacity of civil servants and service providers for facilitating responsive services. E-learning platforms for diverse learner / occupation groups are available with rich content base. However, the Usage statistics of these platforms are rather modest.

Around 1500 innovation prototypes have been initiated by government officials. But only 2% of the innovations have so far been scaled up.

The project introduced an innovative training approach called *Empathy Training* aimed at 'exposing' mid-to-senior level government officials to the challenges of accessing public services. More than 6000 participants of Empathy Training helped create 1500+ prototypes for pilot implementation. Around 90 of them are replicated and 28 scaled up. The net impact of the intervention is to induce a new management culture with a pro-people mind-set.

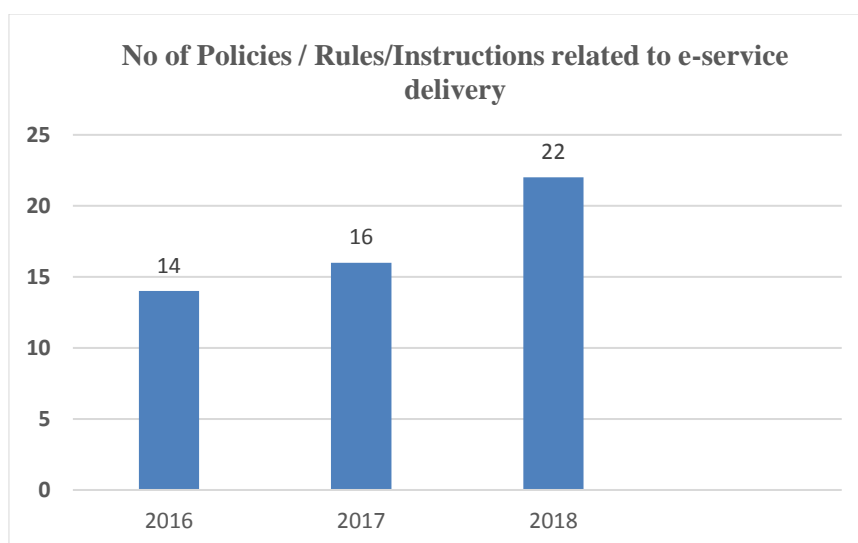
The project has introduced a Service Process Simplification (SPS) approach to simplify the conventional approach of work. It involves (i) mapping out the steps and processes for service delivery; (ii) identifying duplications and eliminating redundancies; and (iii) redesigning relevant processes with citizen-centric design principles to improve ease of service access. A total of 427 public sector services have been simplified and the process is now been ingrained in the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) process.

Component 3: Enabling Environment

The Evaluation team noted that a2i project was instrumental in framing and/or influencing about 22 laws / policies / guidelines / rules / technical standards related to e-Service delivery and implementation of relevant project initiatives. In addition, the project had made significant contribution in other important policies and legislations such as National e-Service Act 2014 and e-Service Guideline 2016, ICT Policy 2015, Cyber Security Strategy 2014 and Information Security Policy Guidelines 2014 – to name a few.

During the period 2016 to 2019, a2i has played a noticeable role in policy influence by facilitating the issuance of policy directive, rules and circulars related to Digital Centres based at UP, Pourashava and other operational areas of e-services. a2i has also provided technical support in drafting the formal gazette notifications on the establishment of the

innovation teams at various levels. There appears to be an increasing trend in terms of the number of policies, rules and regulations/ notifications as regards the process and implementation of e-governance – and a2i has played a significant catalyst role in the process.



The Evaluation team would like to recommend further research to assess the implications of such policies in mainstreaming e-governance and particularly the role, function and space of engagement of a2i. The team however observed that the G2P remittance payment, especially on Social Safety Net programme has been established, piloted and implemented in 11 Upazilas of 4 districts. This is essentially an excellent pro-poor and inclusive governance strange. Such a G2P payment system needs to be up scaled immediately.

Rural and decentralised financial (banking and non-banking) services are still inadequate to provide hard to reach and unserved / underserved areas. Inclusive public services would demand more rural banking and non-banking services.

As a whole the receptivity, interest and the demand side of e-services are increasing at a faster speed, but the preparedness of a2i outlets, in particular, the UDCs need serious review and assessment.

Component 4: Innovation

The project has significantly contributed towards developing a strategy and institutional mechanism to boost innovation.

Service Innovation Fund (SIF) has encouraged the young professionals to create innovative public service delivery system. As of date 209 projects have been funded through Innovation Fund of which 19 have been scaled-up. Cumulatively, 1.22 million beneficiaries have been benefited from the SIF prototypes till December 2018. The most importantly the SIF has changed the mindset of the public officials to think out of the box.

iLab is a driving more than 200 high-impact frugal innovation; and has made significant breakthrough to develop low cost innovations and appliances suitable to the need of the country as well as countries of global south. A number of these path-breaking innovations (e.g. portable infant incubator, low cost 3-D printer for producing customised artificial limb, centralized nebulizer machine et. al.) have been recognised internationally. Of late iLab has initiated steps to protect Intellectual Property of these innovations; and 25 of such initiatives have been brought under patent and/or copyright regime.

Component 5: Linkages with Public and Private Sectors

5300+ Union Digital Centres have been established for easier access of public services, as well as some important commercial / private services, at the door step of the people. It is evolving as an effective service delivery hub for underserved communities. The Digital Centre for the specific communities (like RMG Workers, Farmers, Fish & Jute Industry Workers, Expatriate Workers) is also noteworthy. The UDCs use an integrated service delivery platform, Ek-Sheva, for delivering 150+ services to an estimated 6 million users; and there has been significant reduction of time, cost and visits (40%) for accessing services .

The financial services through ‘Agent Banking’ with the active engagement of UDCs has significantly contributed to inclusive financial services.

UDCs with relevant improvisations, carries the potential of becoming unified channel for delivering digital service (and products) at the grassroots.

The following matrix provides an overview of some of the selected a2i interventions and innovations:

8.5 Million students learning from Multimedia Content Developed by 100,000+ Teachers	105 Digital Talking Text Books for all Visually Disabled Students	133 Innovations Incubated through Service Innovation Fund
101 Million+ Result of Public Exam over SMS 20 Million+ admission Applications Through SMS	\$28.15 Million Earnings for Digital Centre Entrepreneurs	237 Million Services Provided to Citizens from Digital Centers
Online Registration of 2 Million+ Male & Female for Overseas Jobs	146 Million Births Registered Electronically	4.7 Million Sugarcane purchase orders sent over SMS

6.3.3 Contextual, Sectoral and organizational Drivers / Influencers of Success

Bangladesh over the last four decades have set a number of Administration Reform Commissions to bring in “substantive, qualitative and meaningful” reform of the administrative system and process to increase the quality of service delivery and a responsive governance system.

Although most all reform commissions broadly emphasized the need for such processes and procedures, but none of the administrative reform programs could make any dent to change the quality and mode of service, especially in the rural areas.

a2i emerged as a strong and nationally led and owned project after Awami League assumed power in 2009. Since then a2i started to expand exponentially. From a simple project established to share information with the citizens, a2i has evolved now as a broader public administration reform programme. Although initially a2i didn't have any specific vision as such, in course of its journey, it made efforts to promote its vision clear- "bringing government services closer to citizens".

a2i emphasized the need for public service delivery through ICT led innovation. To this end, it was necessary for a2i to put its efforts in service process simplification (SPS) so that service can be provided easily from the supply end and which will also pave the way for accessing the services easily by the stakeholders representing the demand end.

A2i opted for "technology" as an enabler of service delivery and a bottom-up approach was adopted to reach the disadvantaged. A2i strategically chose rural Bangladesh, where most un-served and under-served population of Bangladesh live. To make the service reachable to the poor a2i opted the introduction of digital technology access points called the Union Information Service Centers (later renamed as Union Digital Centers) as the service access points for the rural people.

a2i strategically chose few critical entry points that could enable the installation of new management and service delivery system. At the national level a2i therefore initiated a service process simplification, e-service provisions, training for civil servants for changing their attitudes to ensure improved and better public service delivery. In addition, a2i strongly emphasized the need for improving governance and ensuring accountability and transparency in the process of the delivery of public service, especially to under-served communities. A2i also emphasized the need for reducing inefficiencies in government service delivery in terms of time, cost and visit.

a2i emphasized the need for improving the access to public services through electronic means. However, to begin with a2i encountered two prominent challenges: (i) government officials were neither mentally nor technically ready to accept the use of technology in service delivery; (ii) existing rules & regulations were not conducive and supportive to the implementation of the electronic and alternative mode of service delivery system.

a2i recognized that capacity building is an essential recipe for being successful. Therefore it developed new approaches to innovate and reengineer service delivery processes with the ultimate objective of making services responsive, transparent and accessible by embedding the culture of innovation within bureaucracy through incentivizing and motivating government

officials and forging partnerships to ensure ownership and resource mobilization (UNDP, 2016)¹⁶.

a2i subsequently moved forward to shift its vision further to “innovation for all”. Thus, the project has broadened its vision from mere “bringing government services closer to citizens” to “developing public sector capacity to innovate” and most recently, the vision has even broadened further to “innovation for all”.

a2i Programme has strongly emphasized the need for effectively inculcate an innovation culture within the civil service, which has been a critical prerequisite for transforming government services towards digitized client-centric e-services and building of an innovation culture in all tiers of government.

a2i has been focusing on the inculcation of an innovation culture within the civil service. a2i also sensitized top-ranking officials about the need for e-services, creating “champions”, To date, there are 1010 Innovation teams in different tiers of government, comprising a network of over 5,000 Innovation Team members.

a2i established a number of partnerships across different government ministries and agencies, multilateral and bilateral development agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector and academic and research organizations for achieving its multiple goals and objectives. The objectives of adopting a partnership approach by the programme are to gain buy-in for the programme, mobilize and leveraging resources, strengthening citizen-centric service delivery through capacity development, innovation, research and policy reform.

a2i has also earned a widespread reputation and recognition both globally and nationally. The program has received several national and international awards since 2009, for its contribution towards improving public service delivery through the innovative use of ICT. It is important to note that most of these awards are international. Amongst others, winning the world’s most prestigious award for excellence in information technology known as the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Award by a2i consecutively from 2014 to 2017 is worth noting.

a2i has received due recognition from the government. The Cabinet Secretary of Bangladesh presents a very succinct observation as regards a2i during his meeting with the evaluation Team. He noted that “a2i had efficiently and smartly introduced the outlets and methodologies to reach the relatively poor, underserved or unserved communities. The Public Administration system is now more pro-people, service delivery are increasingly getting inclusive. The a2i has been instrumental in installing some of the innovations like empathy training, work simplification, e-filing, land record management etc. And these are now being mainstreamed”.

¹⁶ UNDP (2016) A2I Annual Review Report

He concluded that “a2i had initiated and successfully led a mental revolution within public sector and the public officials at various levels are trying and testing to install some form of innovative public service delivery.... We from the government are also rewarding our officers for such innovations. Change and innovations are now part of our APA system”

The Principal Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh also recognized the importance and contribution of a2i towards the digitalization of the work culture of the public administration system. E-filing has seen a good practice that has expedited the routine decision making processes. The Principal Secretary, however, has raised a point of concern as regards the internal governance of the a2i and noted that the project has to be strategic and not over stretched its capacity boundary.

The key strategic drivers of a2i

In summary, a2i, strategically opted for a set of driving factors/processes for drawing positive and tangible results. These key driving factors include: (i) use of technology in service delivery; (ii) Greater priority given to the under or unnerved rural areas, (iii) Active engagement with the grass roots based local government system, (iv) emphasis on accountability and transparency in the process of the delivery of public service; (v) identification of critical entry points to bring the government services closer to citizens; (vi). prioritizing service simplification along with the introduction of digital technology; and finally (vii) strategic use of political appealing vision statement: “bringing government services closer to citizens”.

Policy Influence of the a2i as a public administration reform programme

1. **a2i has been able to inculcate an innovation culture within the civil service** and through this it has sensitized the top-ranking officials about the need for e-services and has established a network of “reform champions” or a “guiding coalition” in order to make public sector reform successful.
2. **a2i has adopted an inclusive, bottom up approach for promotion of innovation culture with a view** to exposing the field level officials to the valuable experiences of innovation for different ministries, which also triggers further demands among citizens, putting pressure on government officials to deliver additional services.
3. **a2i emerged as an influential entity for policy advocacy:** a2i has played a significant role as an “influencer” entity for policy advocacy at the government level. a2i remained active in playing policy advocacy role for designing policies/ regulations/ guidelines related to ICT and non-ICT based services, sometimes through drafting the policies/rules/guidelines, and through providing technical advice. So far, the programme has influenced the formulation /revision of 39 policies and laws to implement its products which have eventually created a positive impact on achieving the national visions and plans.

4. **External recognition:** As a consequence of the policy regimes, acts rules and regulatory frameworks, Bangladesh has significantly moved forward in the E-Government Development Index of the United Nations. Due to the development in information-communication technology sector, over the last few years, Bangladesh has moved up nine steps in the E-Governance Development Index. Furthermore, Bangladesh has progressed 33 steps in the E-Participation Index. Bangladesh secured the 115th place among 193 countries in the E-Government Development Index or EGD Index scoring 0.4862 and 51st place in E-Participation or EPI with a score of 0.8034. Partnership and collaboration with various countries like Peru, Singapore, Paraguay, Somalia, Philippines on various collaborated activities through the South-South Network has functioned well for ensuring inclusive and sustainable development goals. Owing to the fact that different initiatives of a2i have been acknowledged by these countries and they are keen to follow a2i's Innovation Work Model. The Governments of Bhutan, Maldives and Uganda as well as the UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji have shown a keen interest in replicating these innovations in their country. Moreover, a2i's Start to Finish (S2F) Service Tracker which has been lauded as the first international consultancy for e-Governance apps, was replicated by Fiji to distribute social security allowance to its marginalized people.

6.4 Attainment of Gender Specific Goals

The a2i Gender Strategy was adopted in 2015. This document lists key indicators and priority actions for 2015-2016. No priority action has been laid out in the project document for the period of 2017-2019 (June). Therefore, the priority actions for 2015-2016 may be considered to be valid for the whole project period. The end-line evaluation of gender sensitivity of a2i-ii project assesses overall planned outcomes vis-a-vis actual results to the programme's gender specific goals.

The a2i strategy outlines four pillars:

- Internalization of the gender strategy among a2i staff
- Integration of gender considerations in programmatic interventions
- Development of gender-responsive government institutions
- Promotion of gender-sensitive partnerships

a2i-ii has taken into account UNDAF Pillar 7 (*"Gender Equality and Women's Advancement"*), MDG 3 (*"Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women"*), 7th Five Year Plan, SDG goals about Gender Equality (Goal 5) and also other national priorities. a2i claims to spearhead effort to ensure decent work for everyone, which includes women and minority groups.

Gender strategy of a2i aims to integrate gender consideration in all programmatic interventions, however there are some female focused projects, and also there are some

programmes where there are mandatory opportunities for participation of women. Some of the important gender sensitive initiatives are presented here.

Women entrepreneurship in UDCs: Since the early days of a2i project, the mandatory involvement of one female entrepreneurs has been considered as the most notable aspect of a2i's gender sensitivity. Every UDC requires 1 female and 1 male representative in tandem to provide both free and fee-based access to public and private services to citizens. The female representatives ensure that women, specifically rural women of underprivileged areas, do not hesitate to receive any service from these centres. However such initiative to encourage women entrepreneurship and women empowerment is facing various challenges which is discussed later in this section.

Women's innovation camp: The innovation camp is a competition organized by the Access to Information (a2i) Program and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs jointly. Purpose of this camp is to identify some significant problems in the society and bring feasible solution by women innovators through an open competition. Prizes are awarded for the best ideas and solutions at the end of the contest and financial and technical assistance are provided for successful implementation of the awarded projects. In the 2018 Women Innovation Camp, 11 problems have been identified on saving a life, disaster management, education, healthcare, ICT, environment, women empowerment etc. Of these, four solutions have been funded for piloting.

Best School for Girls: It's a television series focused on increasing awareness on girl's menstrual health management. It highlights problems faced by girls in the schools during their menstrual cycle (like lack of female friendly toilets). The objective of the campaign is to increase awareness among school children, teachers, their parents and locals regarding the healthy management of monthly menstrual cycles and create a more friendly environment for the girls.

Saleha Bubur Boithokkhana: An informative television show which enables women to know about various government services.

Achievements of gender sensitivity of a2i activities

The items in the Box below lists out certain achievements of gender sensitive programming within a2i activities:

- As part of building Digital Bangladesh, Union Digital Centres provides the opportunity to the rural women to become entrepreneurs.
- 32.4 million women also received services from Digital Centres.
- More than 95K+ female teachers have completed registration in the Teacher's Portal.
- 3,000 underprivileged rural women have been trained and engaged in self-employment under Skill Development program for grassroots women.
- Projects of 25 women officers who received Empathy Training have been adopted to ensure the participation of women in ongoing innovation culture.
- Some of the initiatives those were chosen from innovation camp and those got support

are as follows:

- **Projukti haate Joyeeta:** A virtual shop and information portal to develop and facilitate skills and activities of rural and urban female entrepreneurs.
- **Food at Home:** A mobile and web based application where home food manufacturers will be able to sell their prepared items and recipients will get healthy food item.
- **SMS Based Certification Before Marriage Registration to Stop Child Marriage Project:** A mobile phone based M.R. system & a helpline (Dial to a short code 16100 from any MSISDN) has been developed to receive any complaint against child Marriage. Birth Related Information can be collected from the National Server by Using Mobile Phone Network through Push/pull SMS service or through USSD Application. The USSD Application (Dialing *16100# from any mobile phone) will help the Marriage Registrars and the mass people to verify the Birth Registration Certificate which is generally introduced at the time of Marriage Registration.
- **JOY: An ICT Tool to Fight Violence Against Women and Children:** A mobile based app which is designed to prevent violence against women and children. An ICT based solution aligned and connected with MOWCA.
- **DURGESHNANDINI**(a game model): A game model which will help adolescent girls of Bangladesh to learn about reproductive health ,security and other necessary issues through an entertaining way and make them more informed and confident.
- **The Nanny:** A mobile based app that will allow unemployed women to do some income through babysitting. Interested women will register in the app as service provider and will undergo various security verification processes including police verification.
- **Android based Mobile Application for Comparing and Detecting Offensive Editing in Photos:** A mobile based app where a manipulated photo can be compared with a real one by their pixel difference. It will scan the edited photo and will try to find out the difference between body language, expression, unmatched picture shade and shadow. This will help the victim to prove that the edited obnoxious photo is photo-shopped and is a creation of some ill-mannered cyber criminals.
- **Anytime Women Job:** A quick job finding platform for women as per her requirement and eligibility.
- **Mental Health for Women:** A website and mobile based app that helps women to find age-relevant information about different health and lifestyle issues; and guides them through various health oriented problems.

Source: a2i Annual Progress Review, 2018 and inputs from a2i team

Women entrepreneurs in UDCs

Empowering women by creating opportunity for them to become entrepreneurs in the UDCs is a flagship women sensitive initiative of a2i. However Table 9 below depicts that the mandatory provision of 1 male and 1 female entrepreneurs have not been maintained in many of the UDCs. The ratio of male vs female entrepreneurs in UDCs is 73:27, which is supposed to be 50:50. Out of 8500 entrepreneurs of the UDCs only 2295 are women. Thus

the envisaged goal of empowering women by creating economic opportunities for them has not been fully materialised.

Table 9: Participation of women in UDCs

Indicators	No of Entrepreneurs till 2017	Share of male and female entrepreneurs
Total Number of entrepreneurs at Digital Centers	8500	100
Number of Male Entrepreneurs in Digital Centers	6205	73
Number of Female Entrepreneurs in Digital Centers	2295	27

In some UDCs the woman entrepreneur is a relative (wife or sister) of the respective male entrepreneur and do not really possess much quality of entrepreneurship. While close family connection between male and female entrepreneurs in a UDC raise questions about the empowerment of these female entrepreneurs, disputes become less in such UDCs (over income distribution). UDCs with unrelated entrepreneurs may lead to disputes among male and female entrepreneurs over job responsibilities and income distribution. Another problem is the ownership of contract for the agent banking. As according to rule the contract is made with one entrepreneur in the UDC, there could be dispute between unrelated entrepreneurs over the ownership. These issues need to be addressed while expanding the activities of the UDCs. We have to bear in mind that the reality in rural Bangladesh does not encourage women to become entrepreneurs in one hand, on the other hand women also lack motivation to become entrepreneurs. Even if they join the UDCs, they don't have the motivation to grow up the income ladder.

Gender disaggregated data generation and presentation

Though a2i has expressed concerns regarding the importance of gender sensitivity of their initiatives, gender disaggregated data is hardly available in a systematic manner. Some of the Gender disaggregated information of core a2i programmes are noted in Table 10 – 14 below.

Table 10 presents that early marriage and narcotics related complains are the top complain calls received through 333 in 2018; however most of the calls were made by man with a tiny 9% complaint calls by women. Only on the issues of women persecution and dowry, more women lodged complaint compared to man, even though the number of complaint calls on this category is very few. This reveals that females are still not encouraged to come up to raise their voice or they have limited knowledge of 333 service.

Table 10: Gender disaggregated data on complain calls through 333 in 2018

Category	Male	Female	Total
Early Marriage	2860	217	3077
Narcotics	1097	90	1187
Rail Sheba	767	16	783

Adulteration of Product	481	6	487
Women Persecution and Dowry	235	243	478
Education	428	31	459
Environment Pollution	405	23	428
Gambling	383	17	400
Extra charge in Govt. application	177	46	223
Government property	175	12	187
Total complaints	7008	701	7709
Share of males and females in total complaints (%)	91	9	100

Gender disaggregated data on various capacity-building trainings has been presented in Table 11. It is evident that almost for all types of training participation of women is very limited. The Evaluation also noted weakness with regard to recording and maintenance of gender disaggregated data as evident from the comments made in the table.

Table 11: Gender Disaggregated Data on Capacity Development Trainings¹⁷

Training / Orientation Activity	Total Participants	Male	Female	Remarks
5 days' Empathy training by Ministries/Departments	1348	920	144	
Cascading workshop by Innovators	10403	7933	2472	
Follow up workshops for drop out Innovators	9	25	1	Total number is smaller than sum of male and female
ToT and Refreshers ToT for Innovators	205	164	39	
5 days' Empathy training by Divcom	56	35	21	
5 days' Empathy training for Natural Innovators	43	3	31	Total number is higher than sum of male and female
3 days' Project Designing Workshop by a2i	538	438	100	
2 days' Documentation Training	305	235	70	
Cabinet Follow up Meeting	931	697	234	
Follow up Workshop/Outcome Study/Study Visit	126	68	58	
Video Making Workshop	65	82	34	
2 days' in-house Innovation Training by Ministry/Directorate/Districts	1042	844	228	
Mentoring Workshop	78	44	12	Total number is higher than sum of male and female
Mentoring Refreshers Workshop	107	87	20	
Digital Bangladesh Workshop	351	295	56	

¹⁷ Summarized from the indicator sheet for different activities supplied by different activity team of a2i

Training / Orientation Activity	Total Participants	Male	Female	Remarks
CIO/IO and Field Innovation Team Orientation	1504	420	90	Total number is higher than sum of male and female
Curriculum Review Workshop	347	280	67	
Workshop on Introducing Modern and Interactive Training Methods	50	42	8	
Half days' Innovation Training in Training Institutes	766	560	206	
2 days' Innovation Training in Training Institutes	477	365	112	
Innovation Showcasing by Training Institutes	562	416	146	
Social Media Sanglap	60	180	12	Total number is Smaller than sum of male and female

Source: a2i team

Participation of women is also much lower than the men in Muktopaath; and here too data-integrity mismatch has been noticed (total number of registered users does not add up to total of male and female learners in Muktopath).

Table 12: Gender disaggregation of an education indicator, Muktopaath

Indicator	Progress till 2017 (Cumulative)	Target in 2018	Progress till 2018 (Cumulative)
Number of citizens that have registered in <i>Muktopaath</i>	104,642	31,134	31,134
Male	5,941	100,000	11,154
Female	1,615	50,000	2,667

Activities under a2i-ii project influencing the SDG goal 5 on Gender equality

Some of the programmes under a2i are directly linked to the achievement of SDG 5 and this is mentioned in Table 13.

Table 13: SDG goal 5 on Gender equality and a2i

SL	Best Practices/ Innovations of a2i	Alignment with SDG 5 and relevant targets	SDG Themes
1	Digital financial services (Digital Payment) and rural assisted e-Commerce	G- 5 T- 5.4	Gender equality
2	Grievance Redress System (GRS)	G- 5 T-5.2, 5.3,	Gender equality
3	HD Media	G- 5 T- 5.1, 5.4	Gender equality

Challenges and recommendations for making the gender strategy of a2i to work

Table 14: a2i's progress against the gender strategy

Pillars of a2i gender strategy	Achievements and challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internalization of the gender strategy among a2i staff	Progress made as a task force was developed. However that task force is not that active, though gender concerns have been mainstreamed within a2i project staffs by involving some staffs to oversee women friendly office environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integration of gender considerations in programmatic interventions	The gender concerns have been taken in cognizance, but has not yet reached momentum
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of gender-responsive government institutions	Various women focused innovations and training of officials can extend positive result in this regard. But no assessment is available
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of gender-sensitive partnerships	The most plausible partnership could take place in the UDCs. But there are various challenges which need to be addressed.

The end-line evaluation team has not managed to gather sufficient evidence with regard to programme level emphasis of a2i on reaching gender-specific targets. Implementation of the gender strategy is not structured. There are initiatives but these are not well structured and well documented. There is a gender action Plan but progress is scattered and the action plan is not well-documented, neither is known to all staffs. In UDCs empowerment of women through the female entrepreneur could not be achieved in all cases as women were not entrepreneurs in true sense; and in many UDCs there are no women entrepreneur.

6.5 Measurable Impact of the Programme

Measurable Outcomes and Outputs against Key Result Areas

With multitude of accomplishments, the a2i project is well poised to achieve to all its targeted outputs and outcomes. The a2i project has successfully demonstrated that ICT, when leveraged appropriately, can be a powerful tool to improve access and quality of public services; and to effectively reduce cost, time and efforts of accessing important public services.

The five pathways (components) of a2i project: e-Service, capacity and awareness, enabling environment, innovation, and public awareness and public-private partnerships, towards realisation of its Theory of Change is expected to contribute to the following results:

1. Underserved people have better and simplified access to public services.

2. Civil services are more effective, faster and inclusive that enables Innovation Eco-system for building a strong institution
3. Greater financial inclusion for the traditionally excluded citizen achieved through digital social safety net (SSN) and banking services

There are impressive evidences of a2i project attaining substantive results of each of these areas. The project has enabled easier access of public services to an estimated 150 million citizens, many of whom are from underserved communities; and as on December 2018 a total of 39.21 million beneficiaries have availed 150+ e-Services: 69 government services, 80 private services and more than 10 banking and financial services¹⁸. The average distance of service accessing points i.e. the UDC has also come down to 4 km as against 5.5 km in 2015.

However there is a need to invest more effort towards service recipients' satisfaction at UDC. The user survey conducted within the ambit of the study conducted by Transparency International Bangladesh reveals that only around 61% of respondents were satisfied with their service access experience at the UDC. While there has been improvement on user satisfaction levels over the years, the a2i project, with its innovative approaches, should aim at achieving a higher level of user experiences.

Land record digitisation has been completed for around 90% of acreage under a Land Ministry project); and a2i has built on this investment to enable 4 e-Services: e-access of land records, e-Mutation, e-Inheritance management, and pilot roll-out of electronic registration of land deeds. As on December 2018, e-Mutation service was introduced in 302 offices and more than 267,000 e-mutation applications were submitted – but only around 59% of these applications have so far been disposed through the electronic system.

The findings of a 2017 TCV+ study on Land Information Services at Jhalakathi Sadar Upazila reported significant reduction of time (91%), cost (81%) and visit (94%) for the service recipients. Such reduction in TCV for land related services is however not uniform. For example, the TCV+ Analysis on Land Automation Service in Nachole AC (Land) Office of Chapainawabganj district in the same year had shown that the land-related e-services have resulted in relatively modest (and probably realistic) reduction in time (46%), cost (49%) and visit (22%) for the service recipients.

The Evaluation team has noted with appreciation the efforts invested towards 'Service Process Simplification' – adapting an alternate bottom-up model conducted by the practitioners, as against typical practice of Business Process Reengineering (BPR) in governance reform. As on date a total of 427 services have been simplified, and three fourth these (319 services) simplification has been conducted under the aegis of the Cabinet Division. Another 21 service process simplification prototypes were carried out within the ambit of Service Innovation Fund (SIF) and an estimated 1.22 million citizens are reportedly

¹⁸ This count excludes 185 citizen centric services of district administration and various ministries, the application for which could be submitted through e-Nothi system. It is worthwhile to mention that Bangladesh Service Application Platform (BSAP) has been integrated with e-Nothi system.

benefiting from the scaled-up SIF projects. The SPS endeavour has now been ingrained in the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) process.

Another unique initiative that the Evaluation team has noted to much appreciation is the Innovation Lab (iLab) which emerged as an initiative in response to latent creativity and innovation ideas of government officials plus individual innovators. With 219 supported innovation projects, iLab has managed to spur innovation culture among young people; and take a leap in driving high-impact frugal innovation such as portable infant incubator, low cost 3-D printer for producing customised artificial limb, centralized nebulizer machine, digital white cane for blind et. al. Under an elaborate IPR strategy, iLab has so far completed fifteen Copyrights and fifteen Patent filings; and commercial production of 10 innovations has been initiated.

During the period 2015-18, the project has trained / oriented more than 20,000 service providers to design and implement e-services. The unique 'Empathy Training' approach aimed at 'exposing' mid-to-senior level government officials to the challenges of accessing public services as a common citizen – without their official (and social) privileges; and had helped the participants to ideate change in service delivery behaviour towards improving citizen experience of accessing government services through empathy-led innovation. These ideas are then translated into design prototypes to usher in specific reform/ innovation. More than 6000 participants of Empathy Training helped create 1500+ prototypes for pilot implementation; around 90 of them are replicated and 28 successful prototypes has subsequently been taken to scale.

Deepening the efforts of financial inclusion, a2i has worked with Bangladesh Bank and private sector associates to build citizen centered inclusive digital financial eco-system. More than 4,200 UDCs have been covered under Agent Banking and Mobile Financial Services. The number of bank accounts opened by the rural poor in the project areas has increased significantly to 384,030 with around 40% of these accounts enabled for electronic fund transfer digital payment system. However the proportion of citizens using rural decentralised financial (banking and non-banking) services has not grown adequately; it stand only at 12% as on September 2018 which is actually less than half of end-of-project target.

More than 115,000 citizens, of whom 59% were women, received social safety-net (SSN) transfers¹⁹ through pilot e-payments initiative of digitizing Government-to-Person (G2P) system. A study conducted jointly by a2i and CGAP has estimated that digital G2P payment of SSN transfers have saved around 58% of time and 32% of cost for citizen beneficiaries; and it also reduced the visit to government offices by around 80%. Nation-wide rollout of P2G remittance payment is being planned during later part of 2019. Catalyzing payment digitization and Fintech innovation is one of the key pillars of new Aspire to Innovate (a2i) programme.

¹⁹ The SSN Digital Payments were made for six categories of schemes: old age allowance, widow, deserted and destitute women allowance, support to financially insolvent disabled, support for poor lactating mothers, honorarium for freedom fighters, and honorarium and medical allowances for injured freedom fighters

Beyond these quantifiable achievements of a2i project, there are anecdotal evidences of enhanced capacity of civil servants and service providers for facilitating responsive services. This is more pronounced for officials who have undergone intense training / orientation programmes of a2i, but has not yet become an ubiquitous occurrence; and much work still needs to be done to capacitate the to inculcate service orientation and problem solving attitude among civil servants and public service providers as well as help develop their capacity with regard to tech enabled innovation in public service delivery. The Evaluation team would therefore recommend conducting a methodologically robust study to better understand the scale of capacity development requirement towards attainment of new and ambitious a2i programme

Finally, the most important features that have contributed to the success of s2i are: (i) the project could manage to get continuous support from the top political leadership; and (ii) a2i's as a project very much professionally and tactically package the "whole of government and society" approach to the policy makers, capturing the need of the entire government functionaries starting from the ministries to the local level offices.

6.6 Lessons Learned

Key lessons from the Project

Broadly speaking a2i, in effect, is not only a digitalization but could also be seen as a package of pro-people, pro-poor public administration reform programmes.

It appears that a2i is already in a process of institutionalization. The Government of Bangladesh has by now designated a senior official of the ministries as Chief Innovation Officer/ Innovation Officer, as the "reform champions" to guide and support various innovations and take active initiative towards institutionalization of such innovation culture in the ministries and departments/agencies.

The project has managed to develop and maintain a partnership and cooperation arrangement with media for the dissemination of e-services and create awareness and the demand from below.

a2i has adopted an inclusive, bottom-up approach for the promotion of innovation culture in public service delivery.

The **National Portal** is currently serving more than 1.5million users where they are enjoying e-services with 90 million hits per month (KOICA 2018). Different evaluations observed that the Portal had reduced the time and costs of the citizens in accessing government services. However, the National Portal is still more information- centric than service-oriented.

The **e-Nothi** has expedited the delivery of public services.and has significantly reduced the time and costs and also enhanced citizens' trust in the service delivery system of the

government. However, the active users of e-nohti are still very low and it demands further expansion.

e-Mutation has made the land record management efficient, hassle-free and transparent. But However, sustainability and replication of e-Mutation is still a challenge. The functional/institutional ownership needs to be transferred to the Ministry of Land and Land Reform Board immediately.

Union Digital Centres (UDCs) Evidences from the field suggest that the Union Digital Centres (UDCs) have significantly transformed the lives of the people of the underserved areas. The UDCs are providing as many as 116 different types of services and have reduced TCV significantly. It could be recognized as a dependable “service delivery hub” for the unserved and under-served population. Despite being its functional importance, the UDC’s financial sustainability appears to be a challenge.

G2P Payment is a remarkable move to reach the poorest of the poor who are the beneficiaries of the social safety net programs. The G2P has transformed the manual, paper-based system for transferring the payments of Social Safety Net Programs through a much user-friendly agent banking approach based at the UDCs. Furthermore, as an inclusive approach, G2P has created an entry point for the SSNP program beneficiaries to get involved in the formal banking system. Most importantly, G2P has sealed the scope of any corruption /leakage of the SSNP services.

Multi-Media Classroom (MMC) is an interesting innovation to address the digital and education divide. The MMCs has helped and enabled the teachers to use of ICT tools for class room teaching. Around 9.5 million students have been benefitted by the MMC. However, monitoring the effective functioning of the MMCs and collection of real time data on the use of MMCs are inadequate.

Empathy Training is a unique approach to develop a responsive and proactive service to the citizens. However, there is hardly any evidence-based research on the overall impact of the empathy training and the innovation being practiced.

Service Innovation Fund (SIF) has contributed significantly to the innovation eco-system. Out of 53 projects of SIF, 17 projects have been scaled up. It is estimated that cumulatively

about 0.9 million people have been benefited from the SIF proto-types till June 2018. Like some other innovations, under a2i, there is also an absence of evidence-based research on the overall impact and implications of the SIF generated innovation.

Changing values and attitudes of public officials. The a2i’s efforts to capacity development of civil servants have significantly changed the values, attitudes and responsiveness of the civil servants, which in effect have contributed significantly to the building of an innovation culture in all tiers of government.

a2i has leveraged its success through partnerships: a2i has established a number of local and global partnerships across public, private and development organizations for achieving its multiple goals and objectives. By June 2018, a2i has made active partnerships with 96 organizations of which 83 are national and 13 are international. A2i has also established partnership with academia and research organizations for drawing new innovation, development research and process analysis.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation: a2i has successfully contributed towards building the South-South Cooperation platform to facilitate the exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences on innovation in public service delivery among the countries of the global South. Meanwhile, Bangladesh government has already set up a ‘South-South Cooperation Cell’ at ERD.

a2i has made impact beyond the national boundaries: a2i has also disseminated its innovations/ products to countries like Maldives, Bhutan, Nepal, Somalia, Fiji. Furthermore, a2i has contributed to Bangladesh’s advancement in global e-government development ranking (115th position in 2018 compared to the 150th position in 2012). Besides, a2i has earned international recognition by receiving a good number of national and international awards on use of ICT in public service delivery.

a2i emerged as an influential policy advocacy entity: a2i has actively provided technical assistance for the designing/ drafting the policies/ regulations/ guidelines related to ICT and digital management. According to a2i inventory, the programme has supported directly/indirectly in the formulation /revision of 39 policies and laws (some of the noteworthy policies include - e.g., Digital Bangladesh Vision 2021, the Seventh Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) and the National ICT Policy 2015. However, so far a2i has not been able to play an active policy advocacy role in broader issues related to development management and e-governance through its in-house research and communication and dissemination tools.

Project Management and Institutionalisation

As evident from the narratives of prior sections, a2i project has managed to achieve remarkable results in ensuring that citizens from underserved communities from ongoing ICT mediated transformation and improve the quality of their lives from easy access to simplified and digitized public services. And this has been achieved with a reasonably lean but entrepreneurial organisational structure, given the complexity of their tasks and the need for coordination with multiple stakeholders across the government as well as private sector and civil society.

The programmatic organisation of a2i has so far been rather flat with more than 10 programme verticals reporting to the Project Manager under supervision and guidance of National Project Director. This agile ways of working has allowed flexibility of entrepreneurial functioning, which was needed during initial years of a2i operation. At the same time the Evaluation team has noted limitations of such ways-of-working, which in some ways has restrained its performance, especially on occasions when there is a need of cross-functional and inter-disciplinary approaches for addressing an existing challenge or pursuing a new

initiative at the institutional level. This also seems to have impacted the programme level operational data-system of a2i operation, in spite of a data oriented Results Management Team. The Evaluation team had to make several rounds of iterative requests before the project could collate and present all information relevant for carrying out the end-line evaluation mandate. Going forward, it would be helpful to undertake an objective appraisal of organisational systems and processes, preferably in the form of an Organization development (OD) Study to suggest relevant refinements of structural and institutional arrangements of a2i project operation. The OD study could also look at systemic mechanisms that would allow the organisational competences and good practices of a2i get percolated across other Divisions and Ministries of the Government.

6.7 Sustainability of Project Outcome and Practices

The issue sustainability was examined from the perspectives of institutional, financial and policy dimensions. With its inception in the Prime Minister's Office and its continued patronage by the Cabinet Division, a2i has forged strong institutional partnerships with all relevant Ministries, Divisions, other National Agencies and Universities; and has concurrently helped incubate civil society and private sector partnerships with distinct result oriented objectives and agendas. These partnerships and coalitions will certainly be carried forward during the implementation of new a2i programme. Enhanced cooperation between program partners has also helped create decentralized self-driving networks of e-governance promoters; sustenance of these informal networks should also lead to new cooperation initiatives at local level. The obligatory co-funding through local budgetary provisions, which the programme encouraged, is expected to continue to enable continuance of ongoing programme activities on ground. And finally the policy level transformative changes that a2i has helped to usher-in will continue to provide conducive policy and legislative framework for furthering e-governance and innovation objectives that a2i espouses towards realisation of Digital Bangladesh.

7. Recommendations for Future Directions

On the basis of their assessment of the accomplishments of a2i programme, identified weaknesses and noted challenges in going forward, the Evaluation would like to recommend the following:

1. The a2i project has managed to achieve remarkable results over past years across many domains and strategic areas, even beyond their core mandate of ensuring easy access to simplified and digitised public services. While such diversification of efforts is commendable, such spreading out of activities portfolio has impeded in certain ways the managerial oversight that is important for ensuring the quality of project interventions and outcome. This also got reflected in the efforts of a2i team in collating relevant follow-up information that the Evaluation team for carrying out their mandate. It would be helpful for the a2i project team to focus on consolidating the gains towards institutionalisation and mainstreaming of successful high- impact initiatives (such as e-Nothi, e-Mutation and P2G payment system).

2. This should be complemented with nuanced efforts of capacitating a2i partners at all levels: Ministries / Divisions, Districts and sub-District levels, through planned effusion of organisational competences and good practices of a2i to its partners – so that the initiatives ideated and spearheaded by the project could eventually be transferred for mainstreaming by respective Ministries and Divisions. The Evaluation team would also recommend conducting a methodologically robust study to better understand the scale of capacity development requirements of mid-level civil servants and lower bureaucracy over the next five year. The project should also explore the feasibility of building on the accomplishments of change-agents at all levels of government, encouraging them to become the ambassadors of change.

3. The End-line Evaluation did not manage to gather sufficient evidence with regard to programme level emphasis of a2i on gender-specific targets; and there is an urgent need of taking corrective and affirmative measures for achieving different goals of a2i's gender strategy. To begin with, the gender strategy needs internalization and appreciation among a2i staff. The curriculum of training package on gender should be reviewed and new issues related to a2i projects should be included in the orientation and training package. Other three critical areas of interventions could be

- Integration of gender considerations in all programmatic interventions of a2i. The Gender Task Force, which was created in 2015 should be made functional. The project should also consider developing gender specific compliance I markers for decisions on any new initiatives under a2i. A framework should be developed for gathering gender disaggregated data; and this should be used by all project interventions under a2i. Affirmative support for scaling up of gender sensitive innovation may also be considered.
- Promotion of gender-sensitive partnerships for women's economic empowerment through entrepreneurship development in UDCs. Initiatives like Ek-Shop and Agent Banking should be made more accessible to women with affirmative bias toward women's participation.
- a2i should consider augmenting its Facilitate development of gender-responsive government institutions

4. The Evaluation team would strongly recommend employing the expertise of an Organizational Development Specialist to appraise the present ways-of-working of a2i team and present plausible scenarios on next-generation operating model for a2i; and on the basis of these inputs propose appropriate structuring of a more efficient implementation support mechanism for the new Aspire to Innovate (a2i) programme. The OD expert could build on the insights derived from the portfolio sense-making session conducted by UNDP with the a2i team, which recognized the need of articulating core capabilities of a2i in terms of process rather than project oriented outcomes. The OD appraisal should also include an enterprise wide informational audit, to be followed by appropriate corrective measures to ensure that the programme level data-system of a2i is more robust with strong analytical insight and capabilities.

5. Organisational, operational management and regulatory strengthening of the functioning of Union Digital Centres to become the unified channel for delivering digital service (and products) of government as well as private sector at the grassroots. Studies carried out by Transparency International Bangladesh and Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka have a number of relevant suggestions in this regard. The project might consider constituting a task-force / working group comprising of members from both the study teams to holistically look at,

- the business model under the 4P (Public-Private-People Partnership) principle for financial viability of Digital Centres as well as to achieve the goals of societal wellbeing and value of money;
- appropriate legislative framework and policy guidelines for UDCs to function as one-stop-shop for electronic delivery of all important public services.

6. a2i has initiated a number of public service innovations and also contributed towards formulating a number policies, rules and legislative mandates; but the process documentations of such innovations are sketchy and not properly recorded. Going forward the project should definitely lay emphasis on documenting its processes of sparking / supporting innovations and policy reform efforts, as well as its subtle role of advocating within the government. Simultaneously, the a2i team should consider communicating externally – sharing their ideas and learning near real time through blog posts and other social media posts; and undertaking policy oriented longitudinal research that builds upon its rich repository of knowledge on public sector performance and innovation in Bangladesh.

ANNEXES

Annex – I: Terms of References



Terms of Reference (TOR)

for End-line evaluation of Access to Information - II

AGENCY/PROJECT NAME: Access to Information - II
DURATION: 20 days over a period of 1.5 months
COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT: Bangladesh

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR).

(a) Background:

A fundamental government responsibility is providing information and services aimed at improving the social and economic welfare of its citizens. During the first phase of the Access to Information (a2i) Project, fundamental progress was made in improving access to public services through electronic means. However, it is critical to expand the breadth and width of such simplified services and improve the service delivery model to counter the impact of widespread outdated manual processes, resistance to change by civil service staff and a lack of transparency that still frustrates citizens in their attempts to avail government information and services. The project is funded by the Government of Bangladesh, UNDP and other development partners, and is implemented by the Information Communication Technology (ICT) Division.

The project entered its 2nd phase in 2012 (Duration: April 2012 to March 2016) which has been extended up to June 2019 (started from April 2016). The objective of this extended period of the project is to “increase transparency, improve governance, and reduce the time, difficulty and costs of obtaining government services for under-served communities of Bangladesh.” The objective of the extended period is to be achieved by the following 5 components of the project:

Component 1: Strengthening existing e-services and launching a second generation of integrated, inter-operable e-government applications; (e-Service)

Component 2: Sensitizing government officials, training for service providers and expanding digital literacy among the general public; (Capacity and Awareness)

Component 3: Forging strong policy and strategy links to ensure implementation of needed legal and regulatory changes in support of the project; (Enabling Environment)

Component 4: Promoting innovation in the delivery of e-services; (Innovation), and

Component 5: Establishing linkage with public and private sectors and creating awareness among the citizens.

Theory of Change: A2i-II's objective was to ensure 20 million citizens from underserved communities benefited from easy access to simplified and digitized public services. A2i hoped to attain this objective through actualization of the five components stated above. Expected outcome through attainment of the objective is that government institutions in Bangladesh at the national and sub-national levels are able to more effectively carry out their mandates, including delivery of public services, in a more accountable, transparent and inclusive manner.

A team will be constituted consisting of three consultants to conduct an end-line Evaluation of the Access to Information -II project.

The evaluation will focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of project implementation. The findings of the review will be used for designing the next phase of the project.

(b) Objective of the Evaluation:

The overall objectives of the assignment are to conduct the End-line Evaluation of “Access to Information – II”. The specific objective will be but not limited to the following:

Relevance: are the project outcomes consistent with the national priorities, UNDP corporate priorities, and did they remain relevant over time?

Efficiency: to which extent was best value-for-money obtained (results delivered vs resources expended)?

Effectiveness: To which extent were the objectives achieved? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

Impact: What are the positive and negative changes produced by the project’s interventions (direct and indirect)? What has happened as a result of the project? What real difference has the activity made to beneficiaries? Have outputs been achieved? And if so, to what extent have outcomes been achieved?

Sustainability: national ownership of the results and the likely ability of project-supported interventions to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Assess project’s role in influencing wider policy at national and international level.

Lessons learned: the evaluation will also document the innovations and lessons learned from the project. This includes analysis of what has worked and what has not as well as observations related to the project design, management and operation of the A2i.

Recommendations: Considering the progress made this far, what could be future steps for Government and Development Partners to promote effective development cooperation? What could be further improved if UNDP or any other agency implements a similar project in the near future?

The overall evaluation should be in line with 7th Five Year Plan, SDG, UNDAF, CPD and other national priorities.

(c) Scope of work and expected outputs/deliverables:

A team consisting of three members will be responsible to conduct the end-line evaluation of “Access to Information-II”. The consultants are expected to provide an independent review of the performance of the A2i Project.

The team will be responsible for conducting the end-line evaluation of “Access to Information-II” in relation to the above-mentioned components:

The following key questions will guide the end-line evaluation:

- Access of underserved communities to public administrative services enhanced and simplified through electronic means
 - Was the project able to expand the range of accessible services for the underserved communities through e-services and simplification and digitization?
 - Was the project successful at on reducing time-cost-visits (TCV) for citizens through its e-service and simplification-digitization initiatives?
 - How successful was the project in ensuring affordable and easy access to online services for citizens through Union Digital Centres (UDC)?

- Awareness of citizens on availability of public e-services enhanced and capacity of civil servants and service providers strengthened to facilitate transparent and responsive services
 - Was the project successful at creating awareness and demand for e-services amongst the citizens especially from poor and underserved communities?
 - To what extent the project was able to enhance capacity and awareness among government officials at national and sub-national levels to facilitate effective services?
- Enabling legal and policy framework deigned and partnerships established to facilitate responsive and transparent service delivery
 - How successful was the project at contributing to the full implementation of the National ICT Policy?
 - Was the project successful at influencing formation and reformation of policies to ensure the implementation of needed legal and regulatory changes in support of the project?
 - Was the project successful in developing partnerships with different public and private organizations to launch and operate e/m-Service delivery initiatives and develop ICT infrastructure?
- Institutional and incentive frameworks developed to promote innovative service delivery mechanisms
 - How successful was the project at capacity building initiatives to help with public service innovations within government?
 - To what extent the project was able to contribute to advocating for relevant policies required for the institutionalization of public service innovations?
 - Did the project's recognition and incentive mechanism successfully recognize and encourage innovation in public service delivery?
- Linkages established with public and private sectors and awareness created among the citizens
 - How successful was the project at overall awareness raising process of the project's interventions for the stakeholders?
 - What lessons were learned from the various partnerships, and what are the possibilities of broadening, deepening and sustaining partnerships for expansion of e-services?

In addition to the above areas, the consultants are expected to look in to the following area:

- Access the program's gender strategy and the overall planned outcomes vis-a-vis actual results in reference to the program's gender-specific goals
 - Was the project able to accelerate the program towards human development and MDGs through the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment through its programmatic approaches and operationalization?
 - Was the project successful at empowering women entrepreneurs through its Union Digital Centres?
 - How successful was the program's Women Innovation camp initiative in achieving its goals?
 - How successful was the project's skills development initiative in terms of empowering women through their training efforts?
 - Was the program successfully able to reach its gender-specific target through its various initiatives?
 - To what extent have strategic gender needs of women and men been addressed through the project, and has this resulted in sustainable improvement of women's rights and gender equality?

Evaluation Phases:

Inception Phase	<p>This phase is meant to ensure that the evaluation team is fully prepared before undertaking the field mission. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Desk review of existing documents, including project document, TPP, strategies developed by the project, reports and documents developed by the project and write-ups on the project initiatives• Consultation with key external stakeholders.• Drafting of the inception report, including timeline, evaluation matrix, methodology and data collection tools.• Review by the PSTC of UNDP Bangladesh and relevant groups• Finalization of logistics for field visits.
Field Mission Phase	<p>Consultation at field level (not just capital). The field mission will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A debriefing session by UNDP and the project management• Initial introductory meeting/workshop with the stakeholders and partners• Interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with the stakeholders and beneficiaries• Visit to selected field offices• Debriefing to the UNDP CO and the stakeholders on the key findings
Reporting Phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aggregation of findings from desk review and country mission• Drafting of the evaluation report.• Review by the stakeholders for quality assurance• Incorporation of comments and revision of the report.• Submission of the final report

Methodology of the Evaluation:

Document review: Read key background documentation on A2i project. These documents include, inter alia: project document, TPP, annual work plans and budgets, quarterly and annual progress reports, quarterly and annual expenditure reports, minutes of Project Executive Board meetings, any other public documents and publication describing A2i activities

Consultation: Meet key stakeholders-including representatives from GoB; current and previous project management and directors, UNDP management; other development partners, key CSO representatives. The report should be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations, and should be free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis.

The consultants will use UNDP guidelines for reviews and comply with the UNEG “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation” and will respect confidentiality of information providers. The evaluation activities shall be based on UNDP evaluation principles, norms and standards that are outlined in the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (2010).

Input from UNDP:

- Annual Reports (2014-2018)
- A2i project document
- A2i-ii Midterm evaluation report
- UNDP Quarterly progress report
- Country office project document
- IMED Reports
- Innovation Briefs
- e-Government report (UNDESA)
- Digital Service for All Manual
- M&E Reports
- TCV Studies
- Research documents on various a2i programs

UNDP will provide office space (no computer) and will also arrange various meetings, consultations, interviews and ensure access to key officials as mentioned in proposed methodologies. UNDP will bear the cost of such meetings.

(d) Team Composition:

- **International Consultant:** The international consultant will have the overall responsibility for developing the evaluation design; managing the conduct of the evaluation, preparing/ finalizing the final report; and organizing the stakeholder debriefing, as appropriate, with the country office.
- **Lead National Consultant:** The lead national consultant will be engaged to support the evaluation by collecting data and assessing the programme and/or the specific outcome areas.
- **National Consultant:** The lead national consultant will be engaged in data collection and compilation. Additionally, the National Consultant will be responsible for local coordination of the evaluation team, organizing meetings with stakeholders. assist the team in preparing draft report. The consultant will also focus on the gender related issues in regards to the

Reporting, Supervision and Performance Evaluation:

- The International Consultant and the lead national consultant will report to the Assistant Resident Representative (ARR), Business Development and Partnerships, UNDP Bangladesh. whereas the national consultant (Team member) will report to the international consultant.
- The Consultants will liaise with the National Project Manager (PM), M&E Specialist in Partnerships unit. In addition, the PM will inform to the Government of Bangladesh, represented by the National Project Director (NPD), and UNDP, represented by the Head of Governance. The NPD and the ARR and the Governance Cluster lead or anyone who is/are delegated by the concerned officials will be responsible for reviewing the output of the consultant and agree on the deliverables.

(e) Timeframe and deadlines:

The review will take 20 working days over a period of 1.5 months, broken down as follows:

Activity	Indicative time frame
1. An inception report, including evaluation matrix, methodology and data collection tools.	12 May 2019
2. A draft report and presentation on the key findings of the team	28 May 2019
3. Final evaluation report incorporating all the observation and comments from the key stakeholders	20 June 2019

The report should be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations, and should be free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. It should include a set of specific recommendations formulated for the project, and identify the necessary actions required to be undertaken, who should undertake those and possible timelines (if any).

Serial No.	Deliverables	Days Required
	Submission of an inception report based on desk review	06 Days
	Conduct field mission (meeting, consultation, interview with the stakeholders)	07 Days
	Submission of Draft and Final Evaluation Reports	07 Days
Total		20 Days

Annex – II: Key Informants – Respondents of Consultative Interviews & FGDs

Government of Bangladesh

1. Mustafa Jabbar, Hon'ble Minister for Post, Telecommunication & IT
2. Shafiul Alam, Cabinet Secretary
3. Nojibur Rahman, Principal Secretary, Prime Minister's Office
4. Muslim Chowdhury, Comptroller and Auditor General
5. Abul Kalam Azad, Principal Coordinator, SDG Prime Minister's Office
6. N M Zeaul Alam, Secretary, ICT Division
7. Rakib Hossain, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration
8. Faruque Hossain, Executive Chairman, National Skill Development Authority,

UNDP

9. Sudipto Mukerjee, Resident Representative
10. Kyoko Yokosuka, Deputy Resident Representative
11. Shaila Khan, Assistant Resident Representative
12. Mahmuda Afroz, Portfolio Manager, Democratic Governance
13. Kazuyoshi Hirohata, M&E Specialist

Development Partners

14. Dongdong Zhang, Principal Financial Sector Specialist ADB
15. Kishore Kumar Singh, Chief Technical Adviser ILO
16. Tom Pope, Director Economic Growth, USAID
17. Josh Bird, Governance Advisor, DFID
18. Sheela Tasneem Haq, Governance Advisor, DFID
19. Koji Mitomori, Senior Representative, JICA
20. Hong Yong Jo, Program Manager (Aid Management), KOICA
21. Ylva Sahlstrand, Program Manager Specialist, Human Rights and Democracy, SIDA
22. Shamema Akther Shamme, Gender and Inclusion Advisor Plan International
23. Tahera Yasmin, Operation Director, GIZ
24. ATM Morshed Alam, Project Manager, GIZ
25. Aamanur Rahman, Director ERPP CARE
26. Nazmul Hasan, Action Aide
27. Mamunur Rahman, Team Lead, Uttoron, Swisscontact

Academia and Think-Tank

28. Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Executive Director TI Bangladesh
29. Juliet Rossette, Program Manager TI Bangladesh
30. Rafiqul Hassan, Research Support TI Bangladesh
31. Khaled Mahmud, Associate Professor, Dhaka University

Members of a2i Project Team

32. Mustafizur Rahman, National Project Director
33. Nazrul Islam Khan, Retd. Secretary to Government of Bangladesh and former NPD
34. Anir Chowdhury, Policy Advisor

35. Manik Mahaamud, Head of Social Innovation Cluster
36. Dr. Ramiz Uddin, Head of Results Management, Data & SDG
37. Rafiqul Islam Sujon, Head of Secondary Education
38. Purabi Matin, Head of HD Media
39. Forhad Zahid Shaikh, Chief e-Governance Strategist
40. Mohammed Naser Miah Chief Financial Officer
41. Mohammad Arfe Elahi, Chief Technology Officer
42. Faruq Ahmed Jewel, Head of Technology, i-Lab
43. Taufiqur Rahman, National Consultant - Innovation Business
44. Raihanul Hoque, National Consultant - Business Analyst
45. Vashkar Bhattacharjee, National Consultant - Accessibility
46. Ishtiaque Hussain, Consultant-a2i
47. Mazedul Islam, Programme Implementation Specialist
48. Mahmodul Islam Smaran, Data & Reporting Expert
49. Afzal Hossain Sarwar, Focal of Primary Secondary Education
50. Parvez Hasan, Local Development Specialist
51. Mahbubur Rahman, Capacity Development Expert - Public Service innovation
52. Ashoke Kumar Biswas, Capacity Development Associate - Public Service Innovation
53. Md. Anowarul Arif Khan, Results Management Expert
54. Mohammad Ashraful Amin, e-Service Specialist- Digital Access
55. Tohurul Hasan, Program Manager-Digital Financial Service
56. Shakila Rahman, Gender Focal Person
57. Tanjina Sharmin, Communication Expert
58. H.M. Asad-Uz-Zaman, Policy Specialist Skills for Employment
59. Md. Hafijur Rahman, Solution Architect
60. Md. Fazle Munim, Technology Expert
61. Md. Tanvir Quader, Senior Software Engineer
62. Rezwanul Haque Jami, EM Solutions Architect & e-Commerce Team Lead
63. Mohammad Ashraful Amin, e-Service Specialist, 333 Focal
64. Sadia Afrose Shampa, Project Assistant (M&E and Research)
65. Arifur Rahman, HR & Admin Associate

Private Sector

66. Shahed Aam, Head of Regulatory Affair, Robi Axiata
67. Nadeea Khandker, Manager Sustainability, Robi Axiata
68. Kaji Golam Ali Sumon, President, BAPMA
69. A.T.M. Ahmed Hossain, Director, Dhaka Regency Hotel and Resort

Stakeholders in Districts

70. Abdul Awal, Deputy Commissioner, Jashore
71. Dider R Alam Mohammad Maksud Chodhury, Deputy Director, Gazipur
72. Mohammed Shafullah, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Gazipur
73. Ayesha Siddiqa, Assistant Commissionaer (ICT& Education)
74. Zahidul Islam, UNO, Jhikargacha, Jashore
75. Shibli Sadiq, UNO Gazipur
76. Ismat Ara, UNO

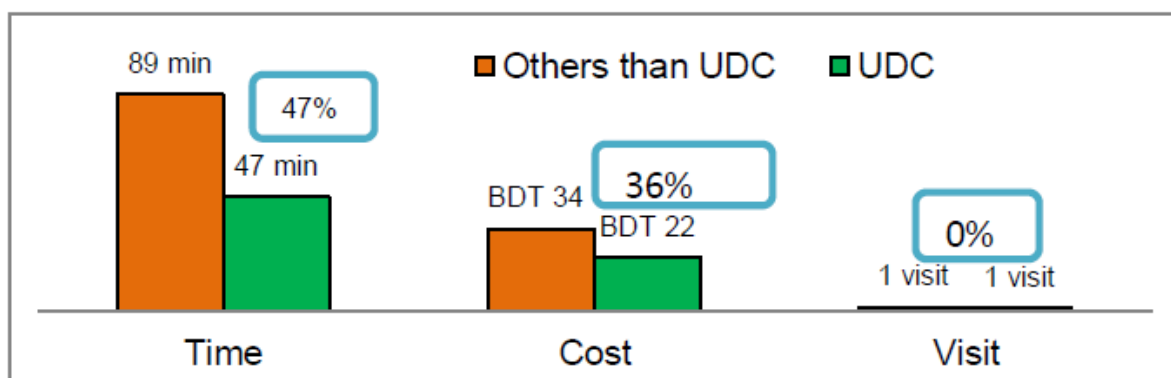
77. Rebeka Sultana, UNO
78. Fazlul Haque Mussoli, Chairman, Mirjampur Union
79. Nasrin Anzuma Runi, Asst Teacher
80. Golam Farque, Asst Teacher
81. Kishore Kumer Saha, Assistant Relation Officer, Bank Asia (Agent Banking), Jashore
82. S M Arifuzzaman, UDC Entrepreneur, Arabpur Union Jashore
83. Rabea Khatun, UDC Entrepreneur, Arabpur Jashore
84. Samir Kumar Ghosh, UDC Entrepreneur, Deara Union Jashore
85. Nasrin Mallik, UDC Entrepreneur, Deara Union Jashore
86. Rokon Uddin, UDC Entrepreneur, Vogra Bazar Union Gazipur
87. Shahana Parvin Pari, UDC Entrepreneur, Vogra Bazar Union
88. Nasima Akhter, UDC Entreprenrur, Mirjapur Union Gazipur
89. Sakibul Mahmud, UDC Entrepreneur, Mirjapur Union Gazipur
90. Ziaul Haque, UDC Entrepreneur, Hujuripara UDC (Rajshahi)

Annex – III: Key Literatures and Documents Reviewed

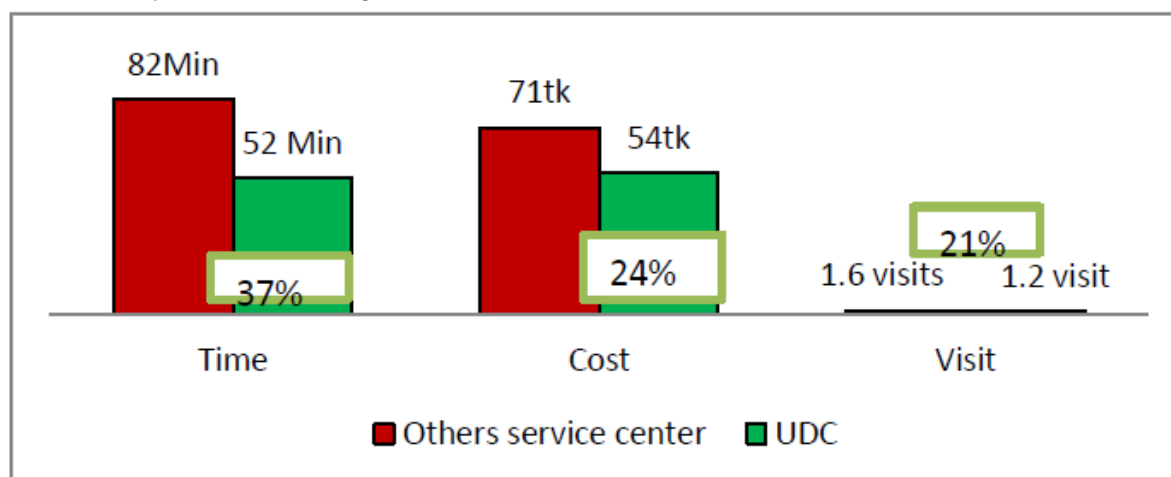
- Programme Document a2i - II,
- Results Framework
- Annual plan and Budgets,
- Annual progress and expenditure reports of a2i,
- M&E Status updates and Programme Monitoring Indicators
- the Mid-Term Report,
- the TCV Reports
- the Innovation Briefs,
- Union Digital Centre Guidebook
- Web analytics and Statistics of various online products (National Portal, e-Nothi, SDG Tracker, Teachers' Portal, Muktopath et. al.)
- Studies and publications related to a2i programme and all other relevant documentations.
- 7th Five Year Plan of GoB,
- UNDAF for Bangladesh,
- Draft Programme Document of the proposed Aspire to Innovate (a2i) project

Annex – IV: Findings from the TCV Analysis of Select Programmes/ Innovations

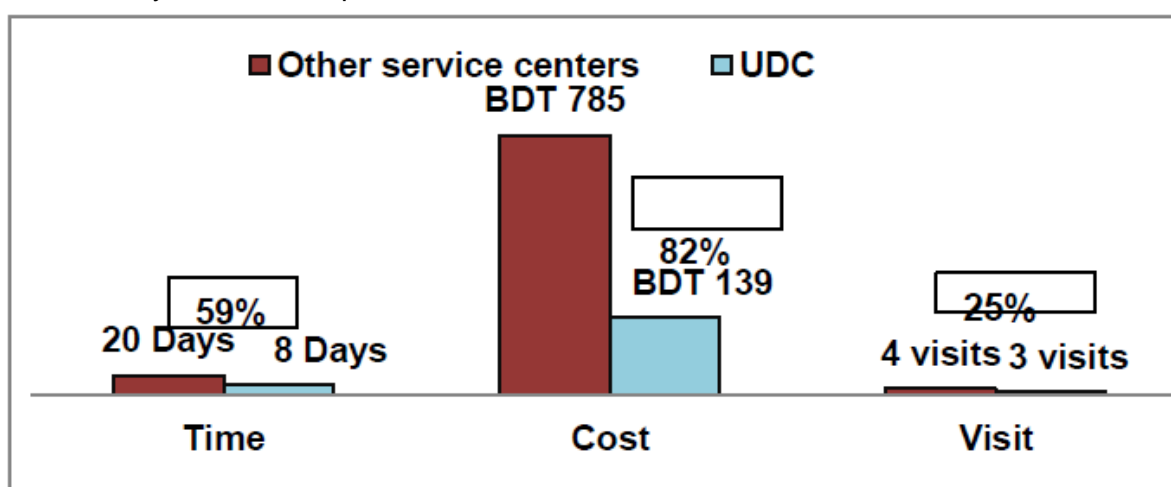
1. TCV analysis on Citizen Certificate Service from Union Digital Center



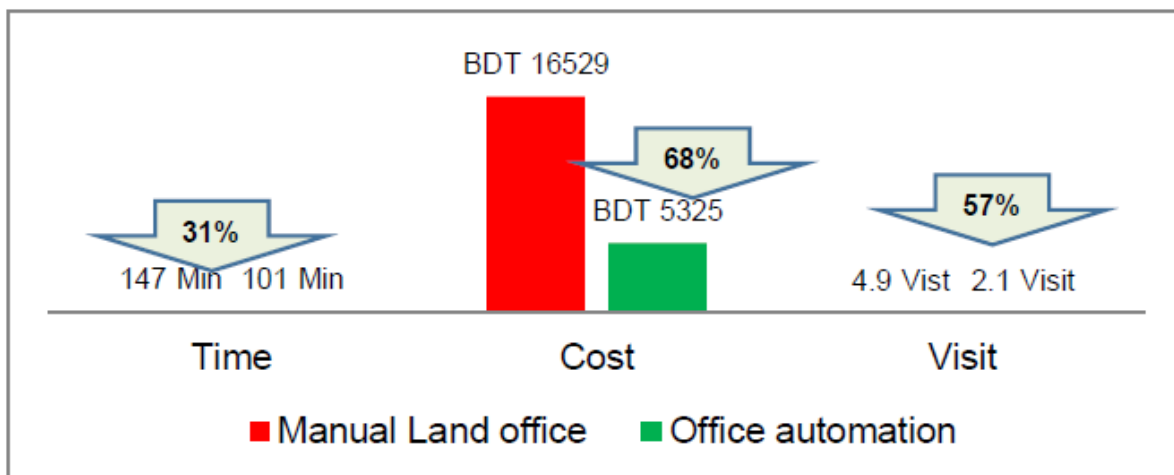
2. TCV analysis on Birth Registration service from UDC



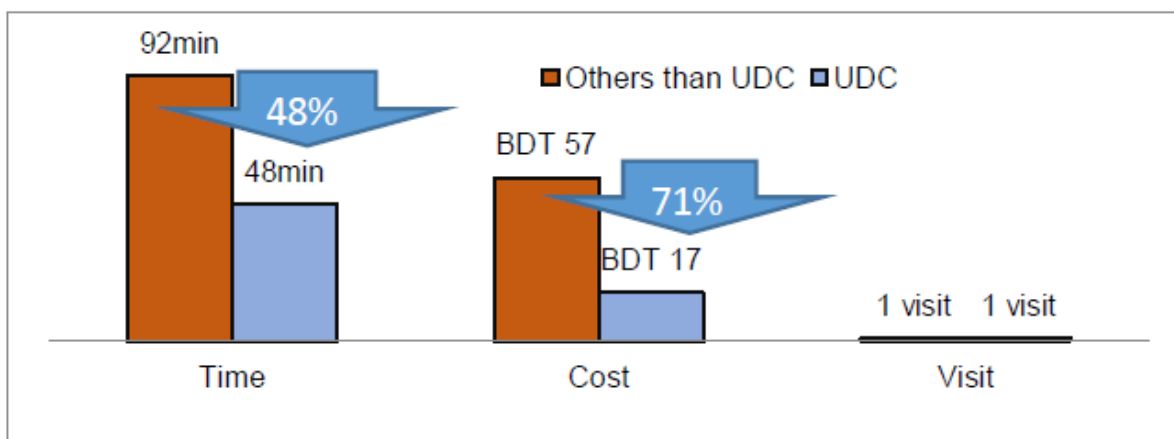
3. TCV analysis on land e-porcha service from UDC



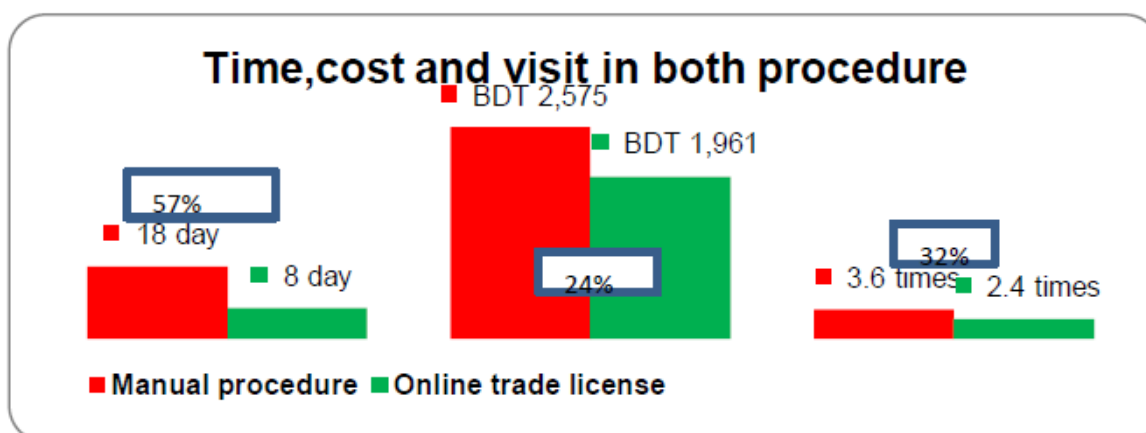
4. TCV analysis of on Land Office Automation System at Jessore



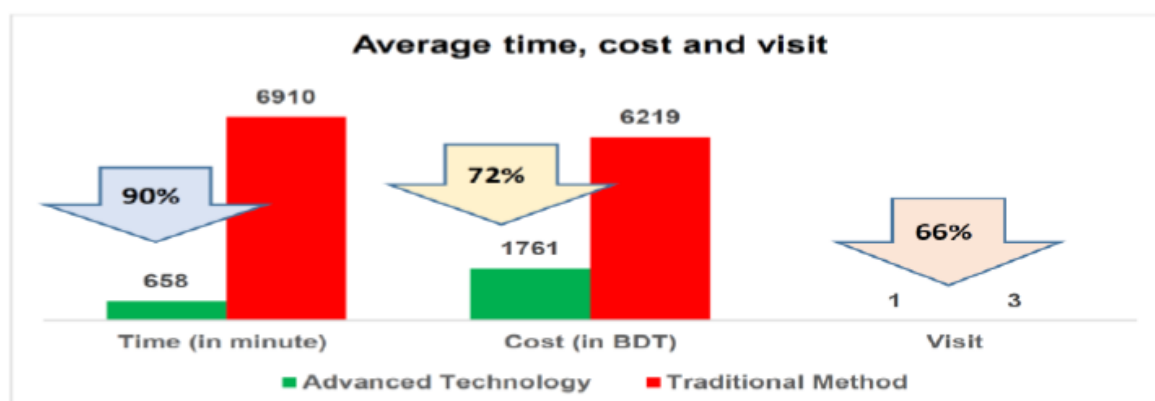
5. TCV analysis on Agricultural Service Provided By UDC



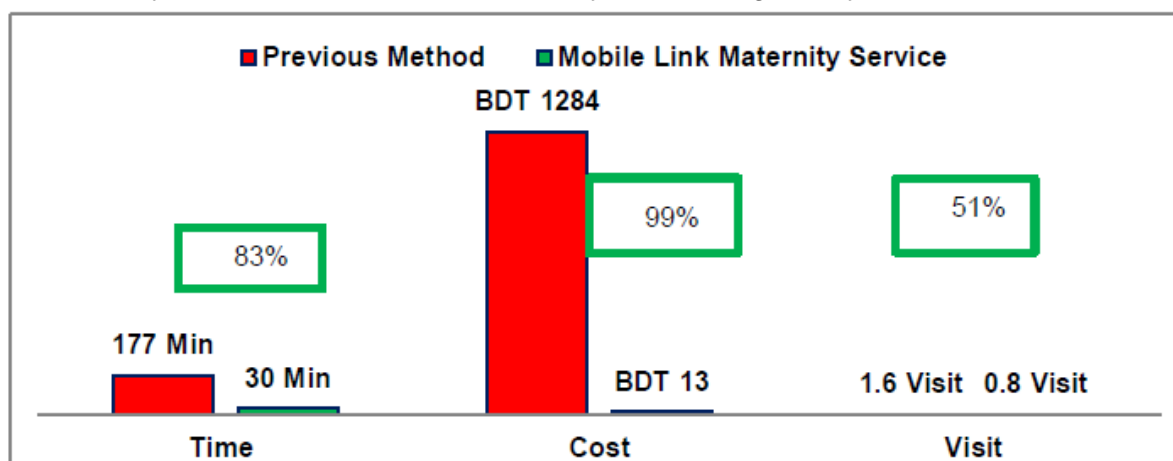
6. TCV analysis on Simplification of Trade License Process from Municipality



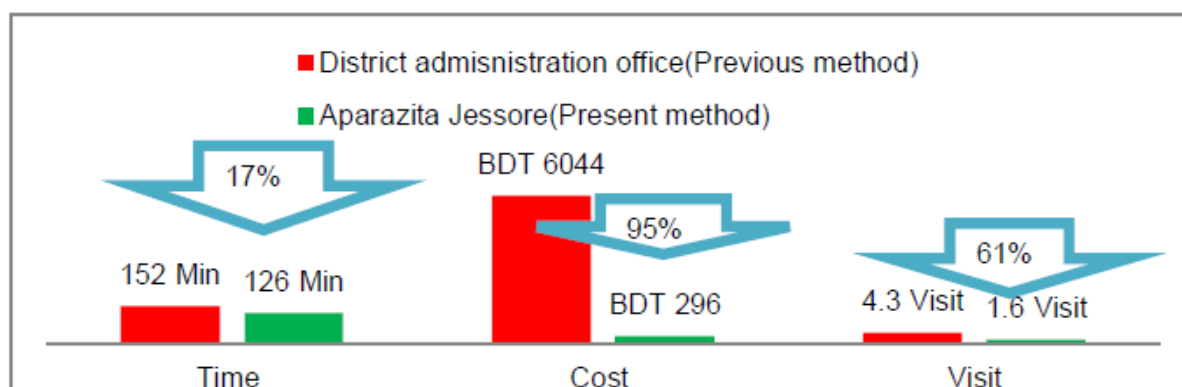
7. TCV analysis of the use of technology for returning registered original documents



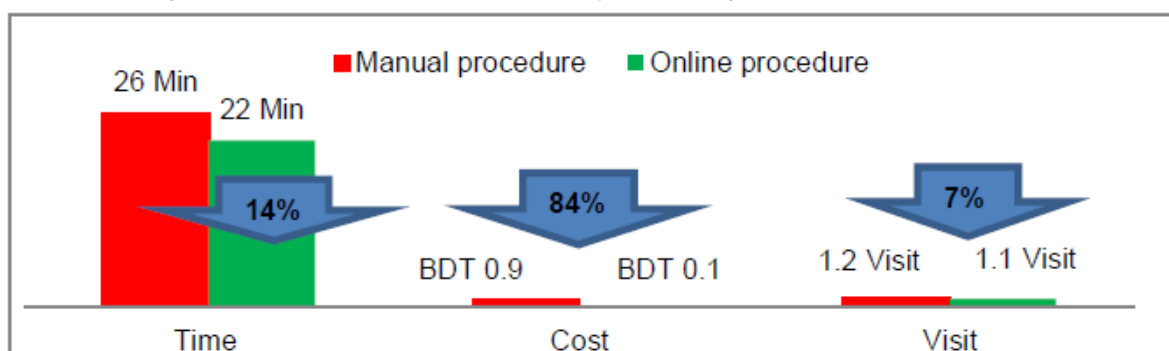
8. TCV analysis on Mobile Link, Safe Maternity and Shining Family



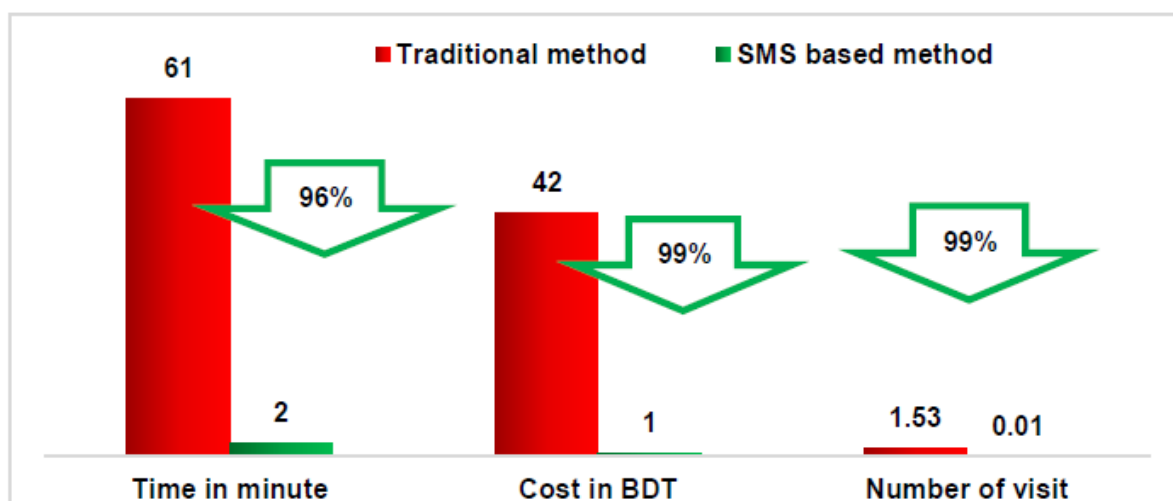
9. TCV analysis on Aparazita Jessore



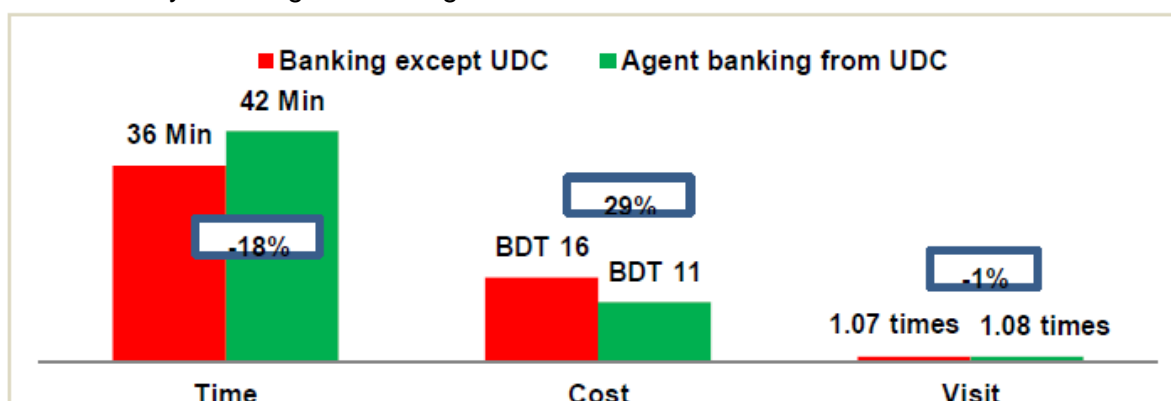
10. TCV analysis on online Water bill & Municipal tax Payment at Jhenaidah



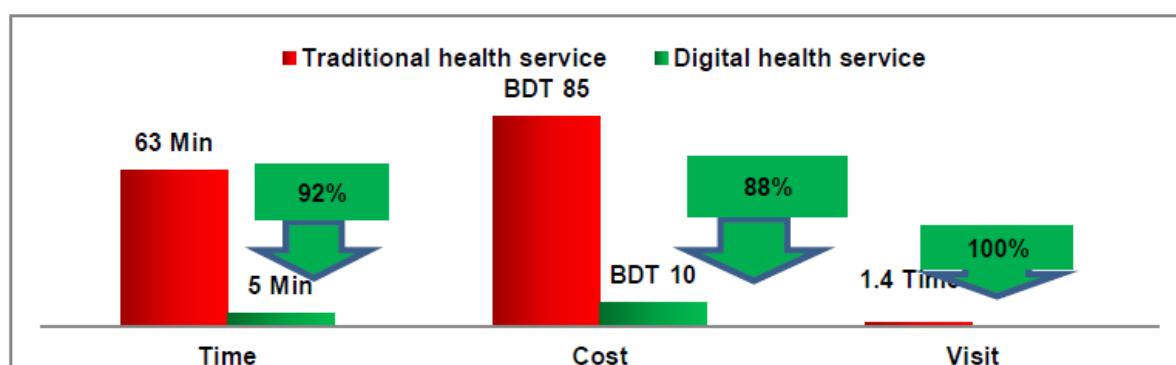
11. TCV analysis on SMS Based Certification before Marriage Registration to Stop Child Marriage



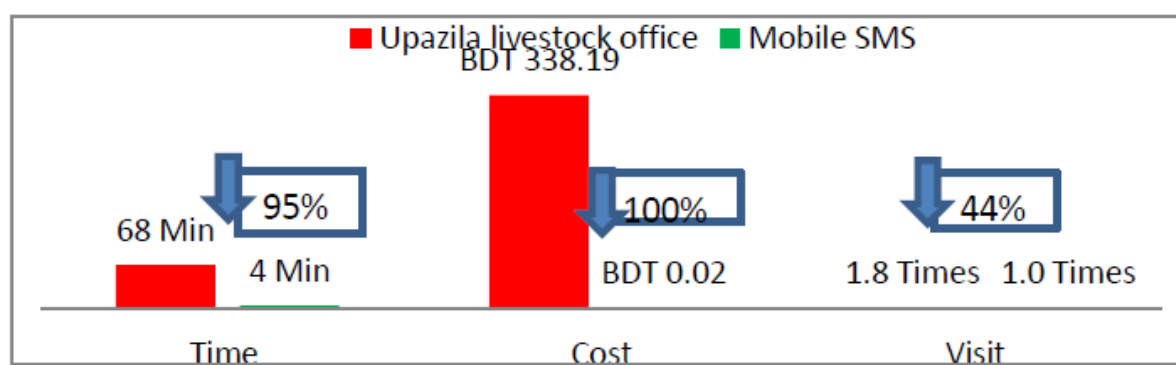
12. TCV analysis on Agent Banking from UDC



13. TCV analysis on Digital Health Service



14. TCV analysis on Livestock Services through SMS



Annex – V: Summary Narratives of Outcome Harvesting Workshop

Name of the Team: Digital Center (DFS & ek Shop)

Brand

WHAT CHANGES DID YOU CAUSE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Capacity and Leadership	Technology and Infrastructure	Strategy, Policy and Legal Reform	Organizational Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitizing the local administration & local govt. representatives to support the model. Continues capacity development of entrepreneurs about new services delivery PPP/ Partnership with different stakeholders (Macro & Micro) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Platform ek Sheba, Ek shop, Agent Banking, e-Challan, MFS to integrate all public, private, financial and ecommerce services Decentralization of service access point 5312 physical centers established with equipment's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed &/or reformed 7 policies related to digital service distribution, financial services and e-Commerce, such as (UDC,PDC, CDC, Digital Commerce, Agent banking, p2g payment, digital payment for SSN etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives/service charge for services 50% female entrepreneurship Entrepreneurship for PWC Home delivery of SSN and other services for disables & old age

Name of the Team: Digital Center (DFS & ek Shop)

Brand

HOW DID YOU ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Challenges faced	Ways to overcome challenges	Institutionalization in absence of a2i	Financial sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection and monitoring of entrepreneurs Financial sustainability for entrepreneurs LGD and Ministry Endorsement; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HPM endorsement Coordination with PMO, Cabinet division, ICT division, LGD and District administration Introducing income generating services Continues capacity development of entrepreneurs Partnership with public and private sector Recognition to entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and coordination by DC and UNO; Central strategy by LGD; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating income generating services by capturing the demand ; Promotion;



Name of the Team: e-Governance (Digital Service Delivery)

WHAT CHANGES DID YOU CAUSE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Capacity and Leadership	Technology and Infrastructure	Strategy, Policy and Legal Reform	Organizational Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil servants now more willing, confident and capable of digitizing and implementing services. • Government employees are not also capable to deliver digital services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared access points, Shared architecture (UISF, Agri Portal, NPF) and associated platforms increasing government efficiency and reducing citizens' TCV (e.g. Passport, e-Mutation, EDCs) • Field level connectivity maintained by Info Sarkar Project, BCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens are now able to make online payments for land related services reducing corruption and TCV. • Scope of procurement from single sourcing introduced (CPTU) facilitating scale up of e-services. • Changes to Evidence Act to enable virtual presence of both witnesses and the accused. • New code in budget code created for management and maintenance for e-services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens can now access services from One-Stop Shops run by private entrepreneurs (previously inconceivable by government). • Government welcomes and patronizes all citizen-centric digital services. • Several awards are initiated as recognition of innovation • Innovation Fair is regularly organized for motivation of innovation • Public Administration Award (PAA) • Annual Performance Agreement for sustainability of innovation and digital services



Name of the Team: e-Governance (Digital Service Delivery)

• HOW DID YOU ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Challenges faced	Ways to overcome challenges	Institutionalization in absence of a2i	Financial sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictive laws, regulations and practices. • Popularizing and building trust among citizens regarding e-services. • Capacity development and Incentivisation of civil servants and public sector employees. • Equipment and internet connectivity. • Government would not allow private entrepreneurs to deliver public services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of restrictive laws/regulations and convincing policy makers to change them. • Bending and bypassing restrictive rules. <i>E.g. Age verification</i> • Budget code creation to facilitate and incentivize innovation in e-services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant ministries/divisions engaged and involved from design phase to implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3331 has a business model where farmers get attractive airtime packages and Telcos receive the call charge. • Private partnership and application of service charge for a majority of e-services. • Managed service for sustainability (Hajj Management etc)



Name of the Team: Empathy, Innovation & Civil Service



WHAT CHANGES DID YOU CAUSE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Capacity and Leadership

- Change in mindset of civil servants to **think out of the box**
- Able to see the public service from **citizen's perspective**
- Identification of **problem in service delivery and its solution** design to implement
- Enhance **capability of documentation & evidence** management
- CIO-IOs & Mentors as **innovation ambassador**

Technology and Infrastructure

- **Mobile apps** for fish farming, agriculture, land registration, livestock, manpower, rural development
- **Website** for patient management in health sector, agriculture, cooperatives, primary education
- **e-application** for cooperatives, primary education

Strategy, Policy and Legal Reform

- **Formation of iTeam** along with their **annual action Plan**
- Innovation **mentoring**
- Formation of **resource pool**
- **Follow-up** to innovators (a2i, cabinet, iTeam)
- **Policy** on iTeam formation, IAP, APA, budget code, ACR

Organizational Culture

- **Ownership** by respective ministry for funding & scale-up
- **Monthly Cabinet Review Meeting** on Innovation
- **Innovation circle & visit** at field level
- Innovation **idea camp** on their own
- **Recognition & Reward**



Name of the Team: Empathy, Innovation & Civil Service



HOW DID YOU ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Challenges faced

- **Right participants** selection for Empathy Training
- Not fully **onboard of higher-level govt. officers** at all level
- Lack of **proper strategic supports** for innovation pilots at the initial stage (funding, Mentoring, showcasing)
- Drop-out due to **frequent transfer** of innovators
- Minimal number of **serial innovators**
- Innovation **scale-up** was not in our focus at **initial level**

Ways to overcome challenges

- **Onboard of Cabinet** to follow-up the innovation activities at all ministries
- **Nudging** the Top level bureaucrats on an ad-hoc basis
- **Refreshers** for drop-out innovators


Institutionalization in absence of a2i

- Establishment of independent unit focusing on **E-Governance and innovation** at Cabinet
- Establishment of **iTeam and their annual action plan** at all level
- **APA**

Financial sustainability

- Government **Economic code** for innovation & research


Results	How	What worked & why?	What not worked & why?	Challenges overcome?
Citizen centric service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Innovation with TCV reduction • Change in mindset of civil servants • Capacity building (empathy training, Mentoring, inno circle, showcasing) • Follow-up to innovators (a2i, cabinet, iTeam) • Policy issue (iTeam circular, IAP, APA, budget code, ACR) • Recognition & Reward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitizing the field level officers (participants) • Formation of iTeam along with their annual action plan • Ownership by respective ministry for scale-up • Formation of resource pool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully sensitizing the higher-level govt. officers • Lack of proper strategic supports for innovation pilots at the initial stage (financial, Mentoring, showcasing) • Frequent transfer of innovators • Minimal number of serial innovators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation scale-up was not in our focus • Onboard of Cabinet to follow-up the innovation activities at all ministries



Name of the Team: Innovation in Society

WHAT CHANGES DID YOU CAUSE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Capacity and Leadership	Technology and Infrastructure	Strategy, Policy and Legal Reform	Organizational Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity developed for 1000+ innovators maturing the innovative ideas by providing technical support Leadership developed for 20+ organizations to adopt innovations and scaled up throughout the country Capacity developed for 25 innovators to become an entrepreneur and 13 innovations have already been commercialized Empowered persons with disabilities with innovative devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing iLab for providing technical support to the innovators Developed an online platform to monitor and analyze all the innovative projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovation team has been formed in every government office to monitor and implement innovations Government has started funding to promote, nurture and implementing innovations Acceptability of innovations by the Government from Private Organizations and Individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations are now welcoming innovations in every area Recognizing/ Awarding innovators Provide incentive to the innovators Engagement of High officials to nurture and monitor innovations



Name of the Team:

HOW DID YOU ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Challenges faced	Ways to overcome challenges	Institutionalization in absence of a2i	Financial sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovators mindset towards the Government vision Timely completion of the innovative projects Lack of knowledge on latest technology Transfer of innovators and ownership Prototype to market ready products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentoring to the innovators Close monitoring and technical support Personal responsibility to organizational responsibility Further R&D on the prototype and engaging private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government innovations are already handed over and sustained In the case of private sector and individual innovations, we are planning for business sustainable – case 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging government to scale up innovation Commercialization of project. Innovator to entrepreneur

Name of the Team: Skills for Decent Employment


WHAT CHANGES DID YOU CAUSE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Capacity and Leadership	Technology and Infrastructure	Strategy, Policy and Legal Reform	Organizational Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The whole program is led by relevant secretaries and DGs and Industry associations - Trained 1000+ trainers of relevant training institute on revised and newly developed market focused curriculum - 700+ industry supervisors from 400+ industries got ToT on Apprenticeship program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills Portal: - Imam Portal - Apprenticeship Management System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Apprenticeship strategy • No skills, no migration policy • Introducing skills cycle in skills ecosystem • Whole of society approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now Govt institution provide training on the basis of market demand and survey • Job fair is jointly arranged regularly by industry and government

Name of the Team:


HOW DID YOU ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Challenges faced	Ways to overcome challenges	Institutionalization in absence of a2i	Financial sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mismatched in demand and supply of skills (Industry vs training institute) - Right occupation for right youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Series of policy dialogue, consultation • Revised curriculum based on market demand • Incentive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own by relevant ministries • Industry contributed 90% of total cost of apprenticeship • Policy guidance by NSDA 	


Name of the Team: Skills for Decent Employment

WHAT CHANGES DID YOU CAUSE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Capacity and Leadership	Technology and Infrastructure	Strategy, Policy and Legal Reform	Organizational Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The whole program is led by TTC under DSHE. - 1000+ Master trainer - 420K Trs trained on TPACK. - 1300+ Teacher leaders (ambassadors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers Portal - Muktopaath - MMC Dashboard - Konnect - 45K+ MMC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT in Education Master Plan • ICT Policy (ICT in Education part) • ICT in Education component of PEDP-IV • 2 big projects under MoE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now teacher leaders are included in planning and development process of curriculum and content by Ministry • ICT now is considered as a integrated tool for ensuring quality education


Name of the Team:

HOW DID YOU ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING AREAS?

Challenges faced	Ways to overcome challenges	Institutionalization in absence of a2i	Financial sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mindset of policy makers and teachers - Train all teachers physically - Poor power and internet connection - Availability of quality content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series of policy dialogue, consultation • New types of motivation and recognition • Blended and E-Learning • Model content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own by relevant ministries • Self motivated teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoE and MoPME have taken large projects - Business plan for Muktopaath developed (PPP)