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পরিকল্পনা মন্ত্রণালয়  
বাস্তবায়ন পরিবীক্ষণ ও মূল্যায়ন বিভাগ  
পরিবীক্ষণ ও মূল্যায়ন সেক্টর-২

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বিষয়ঃ পরিবহন সেক্টরভুক্ত প্রকল্পসমূহের বাস্তবায়ন অগ্রগতি বিষয়ক গবেষণা প্রতিবেদন প্রণয়ন সংক্রান্ত।

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(আশরাফুল ছিদ্দিক)  
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কর্মসম্পাদন ব্যবস্থাপনা ও শুদ্ধাচার শাখা  
সমন্বয় ও এমআইএস সেক্টর  
আইএমইডি

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- ৩। অফিস কপি।

Research on  
Sluggish Implementation of large number of Development Projects in  
Bangladesh resulting time and cost over-run: Causes & possible way  
forward

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Context

Bangladesh continues to invest more and more of its annual budget on development programmes and thus the need for good governance with efficient management of all resources became paramount. A pragmatic approach to governance that will lead to sustainable, climate-resilient, gender-sensitive and child-friendly development seeks to institutionalise a need-based, results-driven M&E system. The system will also be able to assess the performance of governance processes, projects and programmes. The core premise of monitoring & M&E is that services are continually improved through informed decision making and learning, leading to balanced economic progress in the country.

The strengthening of the monitoring & M&E function is underpinned by the philosophy of the Government of Bangladesh to deliver results and hold the public sector accountable for its functions. An M&E is a systematic and impartial assessment of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, theme, sector, operational area and institutional performance. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements and weaknesses. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of interventions.

M&E can serve two purposes. Firstly, it can help adapt project activities to ensure that they are effective in achieving the intended results. M&E can help us identify areas for improvement and ultimately help us realize our project and programme goals more efficiently. Secondly, M&E enables us to demonstrate the program's success and progress. The information we generate from an M&E enables us to better communicate our program's impact to others which is important to convince the government about the continuity of the project, or to undertake more projects, to enhance staff morale, and attracting additional government and donor funding.

M&E of development projects provides government officials, programme managers and civil society with better means for learning from past experience, improving service delivery, planning and allocating resources, and demonstrating results as part of accountability to key stakeholders. Within the development community there is a strong focus on results- this helps explain the growing interest in M&E. It is also important to note that M&E is a regular part of the life cycle of public projects and programmes which should be conducted in a methodologically rigorous and systematic manner. The results of these are to be used by decision-makers and project managers.

The Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) prepared a document titled “M&E Policy Framework” in 2019 in which it mentioned the need for a national policy: “IMED presently is implementing its M&E activities under a guideline and it finds not adequate in its present increasing needs and accountability. The guideline is working but largely for management of activities and inputs, not in a policy environment containing rules and norms, values, principle and accountability to pursue results (IMED 2019, p. 4). In this context it is important to do some important research on sluggish or poor implementation of development projects which have been identified in many M&E reports of IMED and elsewhere. This research has tried to investigate the causes and possible way forward in this regard.

## 1.2. Statement of the problems

Public investment enhances economic growth directly by improving the extent and quality of human capital and indirectly by facilitating private investment through infrastructure projects. Moreover, public projects create employment which in turn has positive impact on economic growth. Public investment is more important for a developing country like Bangladesh where private investment is low. Public investment is channelized through projects in Bangladesh which are published as annual development programme (ADP) containing a list of projects of all sectors along with their allocation for the year. Note that the ADP of each year gets approval in the parliament as development budget after getting the approval from National Economic Council first.

However, implementation progress report of IMED suggests that a large number of development projects are subject to time and cost overrun. This has significant implications for public exchequer, overall economic growth and the welfare of the people. Hence it is important to identify the major causes of time and cost overruns and take necessary actions

to prevent such mis-governance of public projects. The delay in project implementation has been a distinguished characteristic of the public investment in developing countries. For example, five major causes of project delay were identified in Nigeria (Mansfield, 1994) and these are (a) poor contract management (b) inaccurate estimations (c) over all price fluctuation (d) shortages of materials and equipment (e) finance and payments agreements. The faulty and half-baked project documents have been labelled as a common cause of project delay in almost all countries experiencing delays. Al-Momani (2000) called this problem as the problems with "project design". That is, not enough resources and time have been used to conceptualize the projects and design accordingly.

Poor ADP implementation leads to lower growth rate with limited scope to employment generation. Cost and time overrun will increase the size of ADP as well as increase social cost. In the case of aided project, longer implementation period has high rate of interest and add to more repayment schedule.

Bangladesh lags behind in completing most projects in time and within budget, causing cost overruns and lowering the expected benefits from the projects. The implementation rates of the much publicized first-track projects are worth noting. The poor and sluggish implementation rates of the government's much publicized first-track projects such as the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, Padma bridge railway link and Dhaka Mass Rapid Transport are cases in example.

### 1.3. Bearings of the poor implementation of development projects

It is thus evident that development projects in Bangladesh tend to go through multiple phases of revision resulting in time escalation and cost escalation. Because of this, when juxtaposed against the initial projections as regards expected outcomes and deliverables, the majority of projects fail to attain the objectives and targets set initially including the estimates of internal rate of return, financial rate of return and the economic rate of return.

For instance, when the construction of a road connecting major business hubs gets delayed, private investors and businessmen who were expected to gain from the particular project in areas of investment, employment generation, production and reduced supply and transportation costs fail to do so. Consumers are deprived of the timely delivery of services accruing from the investment. All these undermine the cause of economic growth of the country and socio-welfare of citizens.

Secondly, because of the delayed implementation and high costs involved, the cost of the services to be delivered by the project also rises. If it is a power plant, then the price of electricity would rise each time the project's implementation is delayed, if it is a bridge then either the toll or subsidy or both will need to rise when it is built and operationalized. In the final analysis, the burden falls either on the consumers or the producers. Consumer welfare is reduced; producer's competitiveness is adversely affected.

#### 1.4. Research Questions

This study identifies the major causes of project delay in three phases of the project lifecycle – project formulation and approval stage, implementation stage and post-implementation stage. We have formulated a wide range of hypotheses regarding time and cost overrun at each stage upon discussions with the stakeholders and a comprehensive desk review of relevant documents. The hypotheses are:

##### 1.3.1 Project formulation and approval stage

- i. Projects are approved without adequate feasibility study and stakeholder consultations.
- ii. Weak project documents are used where objectives, inputs, outputs, OVI, MOV, etc. are not well documented.
- iii. Projects involving land acquisitions do not provide due care to the issues of land acquisition such as permission from DC upon identifying the specific land.
- iv. Projects with weak sustainability plan are approved.
- v. The costs of projects are inconsistent with Midterm Budgetary Framework (MTBF)
- vi. There is hardly any exit plan for the projects.
- vii. Projects involving civil works lack proper designs.
- viii. Sometimes projects are approved without ensuring project aids.
- ix. Delayed projects are likely to have weak DPP/TPP (due to lack of resources to prepare such documents).

##### 1.3.2 Project implementation stage

- i. DPP/TPPs are not followed closely, particularly the work plans and procurement plans.
- ii. There are lack of coordination among the implementing agencies in the field.



- iii. There is a lack of transparency and accountability of the implementation of the projects.
- iv. Meetings of PEC and Steering Committees are not held regularly which slow down the progress of the implementation.
- v. Inefficiency and carelessness of the project staff delay the projects.
- vi. There are problems in choosing the right contractors. Sometimes the favored contractors are overburdened with works that they cannot complete the works in time.
- vii. The contractors do not complete the works (packages) in time and demand for additional time and costs.
- viii. There is a lack of laboratories and equipment to monitor the quality of infrastructure works.
- ix. Land acquisition is a major challenge in completing the projects in time.
- x. Transfer of utilities, resettlements and evacuation of illegal structures delay the implementation of projects.
- xi. Delay in recruiting PD, project staff, frequent transfer of PDs can delay implementation.
- xii. The PDs and project staff lack adequate skills in project implementation and there is also a lack of incentives to perform.
- xiii. There is no set pool of government officials identified who are good at implementing projects.
- xiv. IMED lacks capacity and efficiency in monitoring and M&E.

#### 1.3.3 Post-implementation stage

- i. Projects are closed hastily without sending project closing report (PCR) to IMED or sending a weak report of little use.
- ii. The physical capital accumulated through projects are not properly stored.
- iii. Lack of skilled people leads to hiring international consultants for providing service (LTSA: Long Term Service Agreement).

## 2 APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods have been used – both quantitative and qualitative data have been used for the analysis.

## Desk Review

The documents reviewed:

- i. In-depth Monitoring 2021-22: Report on 65 Projects
- ii. Completed Project M&E 2021-22: Report on 8 Projects
- iii. In-depth Monitoring 2017-18 to 2020-21: Report on 100 Projects
- iv. Completed Project M&E 2017-18 to 2020-21: Report on 30 Projects
- v. In-depth Post Procurement Review 2021-22: Report on 9 Projects
- vi. In-depth Post Procurement Review 2017-18 to 2020-21: Report on 9 Projects
- vii. ADP Review Report of IMED from 2017-18 to 2020-21
- viii. Inspection Reports of IMED for on-going Projects from 2017-18 to 2021-22: 100 such reports
- ix. Inspection Reports of IMED for Completed Projects (Upon receipt of Project Completion Report(PCR)) from 2017-18 to 2021-22: 50 such reports
- x. Inspection Reports of IMED for No-Cost Time Extension of on-going Projects from 2017-18 to 2021-22: 100 such reports
- xi. Relevant literature

## Data

The following data are used to supplement our qualitative works

- i. An online survey to test the hypotheses outlined above have been conducted. This online questionnaire has been sent to the officials of the Planning Commission, IMED, Ministries and Project Directors (PDs) of the projects. The questionnaire covers the perception on the causes of delays listed above and also what have they experienced in implementing projects.
- ii. We have compiled a data set which includes the details of all projects in the last one year such as total costs, amount of PA, financial progress, physical progress, etc. We will try to relate financial progress and physical progress to project characteristics.

## FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

In this section we investigate further the reason and consequences of poor ADP implementation. A number of pertinent issues have been considered to categorize the reasons for improper project implementation. Every project has unique characteristic and owned by different agencies and handled by diverse personnel. So, problems are heterogeneous in nature. However some problems are common and are mentioned below:

### 3.1 Project identification and preparation stage

#### Delay in submission of project document:

Procrastination in preparing and submitting project documents is a major problem. That is why it is essential to track a project when it is at its incubation. Project implementation authority (mainly different agencies) takes long time to prepare and submit this for initial scrutiny to the ministries and forwards to Planning Commission for approval.

#### Improper preparation of DPP and need to modify even in initial stage:

In planning procedure there are certain guidelines to prepare a DPP. The technical, economic, financial, social and institutional aspects are to be taken care of this stage. In many cases all these issues are not considered for initial project preparation due to lack of adequate understanding, lack of competencies and pressures from vested groups.

#### Absence of all sorts of risk management issues in DPP

Risks and their management are not properly addressed. For example, hazards detecting, designing early warning and dissemination system, emergency communication and response management, mainstreaming, Incident Command System (ICS), environmental, land, and water resources management, flood monitoring using Radar Satellite Imagery, integrated water resources management are the risk issue. If such risks are not adequately addressed, this is likely to delay the project implementation..

#### Delay in project approval

On time approval of project is critical for timely completion of the projects. If we consider project approval process starting from DPP received from Agency to ECNEC / Planning Minister for approval the stage are as follows: Agency (Implementation Authority) – Sponsoring Ministry – Agency – Sponsoring Ministry – Finance Ministry - Sponsoring Ministry – Agency – Sponsoring Ministry – Planning Commission – Sponsoring Ministry – Agency – Sponsoring Ministry – Planning Commission for Approval (ECNEC / Planning

Ministry. Due to procedure in approving the DPP, which often sees multiple revisions, projects cannot start on time.

### 3.2 Early stage of Project implementation

#### Insufficient and Delayed Release of Fund:

Adequate funds are not allocated in many projects. For proper implementation of a project requires smooth and timely flow of required fund. Due to some procedural complexities, fund releases are also hampered.

#### Delay in Lining up / Allocation and Reimbursement of Foreign Aid:

Pipeline for project aid is often jammed and it takes time to release the funds, causing delay in project commencement and implementation. Sometimes, various clauses for using PA are not well taken care of before signing the contracts. There are also delays in agreements. Due to political instability, disasters and economic rescissions donors might delay to provide fund and sometimes there might be delay in procedure of disbursement and official technical problem project may hamper.

#### Misappropriation of Fund by the Agency:

Sometimes misuse of the fund and the local currency might result into misappropriation of fund by the Agency.

#### Shortage of Workers and Skill Workers:

Human resource planning is a critical component for project management. Project Information Office (PIO) has a critical role here. All the member of PIO team should have clear idea and basic knowledge of all the works, activities and component of the project. But due to lack of technical knowledge and skills on some of the sophisticated items, activities and works of the project, implementation of the projects suffers greatly.

#### Shortage of Building Materials

Sometimes shortage of building materials, lack of quality materials and delay in import process might affect the project implementation.

### 3.3 Project implementation stage

#### Weak Procurement management

Procurement is the most critical part in any project implementation. This requires to follow a strict set of rules which also delays the process. Delay in procurement processing and

Completion of contract performance results into two-fold economic loss and sufferings of the mass people (i) increase in the project cost, and (ii) increase in the loss to national economy in term of economic return of the project.

#### Complexity in Customs Clearance:

Delay in custom clearance of the equipment and materials sometimes poses a major problem of the project implementation.

#### Complexities of Land Acquisition and Site Selection:

Land acquisition is a complex process involving many agencies of the government. However, it is a critical factor in project implementations because without getting the land construction works cannot start. In Land acquisition legal procedures are involved. Deputy Commissioners and the Ministry of land may be directed to give priority to acquisition of land necessary for development projects.

#### Inefficiency in Utilizing Released Fund

Procedural complexity is a problem for project implementation which sometimes leads to inability to utilize funds. In the project usually there is a member in the technical committee for purchasing materials; several times the tender committee had to be suspended for the absence of the member. Conducting meeting by maintaining all the procedures and formalities were a problem in this case. That affects flow of project implementation process.

#### Inadequate Internal Supervision and Monitoring by the Agency

Regular supervision especially in the construction works is necessary for quality assurance and proper implementation of the project. In fact PIO, there was no proper supervision of the construction done by PWD which creates lot of quality problems in proper implementation of the project and many problem may create in future also.

#### Lack of Coordination and Cooperation among Departments

Implementation of large projects involve coordination among a number of agencies. Hence it is important to have a coordination plan. To execute and implement the plan is a strong and proper coordination mechanism must be practiced to move all the concern parties in a coordinated way to implement the work plan of the project. But no such coordination mechanism has been found in the project activities.

#### Revision of Project Content:

Revision delays projects and there are cases where revisions could have been avoided. One of the reasons of inherent shortcoming is that project formulation is often done on the basis of

out dated information, data etc. During execution of the project particularly which has relatively longest gestation period considerable changes occur in the projected scenario. As a result the project cost may significantly rise, additional work procurement may be required design/technology may need considerable change.

#### Issues related to appropriate Design and its Approval

There are delays in getting architectural design and structural design in project implementation. Concerned PWD engineers are responsible for design work and sometimes they are over-burdened with works. There are also lack of efficient and skilled architects and structural designers in the PWD.

#### Non-existence of Result base M&E

Result based project M&E is an important yardstick to measure the success of a public project. In general sense project is a plan, design, or a scheme for doing something to create 'public value'. Without considering outcome, it's a faulty M&E for project.

#### Inadequate external oversight: institutional and technical capacity Constraints for M&E

There is a consensus among the practitioners that the lack of institutional capacity is a major cause of delays in project implementation. Implementation, Monitoring and M&E Department (IMED) of the Planning Ministry which is the entity responsible to monitor implementation of public projects does not have the needed human and financial resources, laboratory facilities, training infrastructure for professional development to properly and efficiently perform its duties. Quality of monitoring work and accountability in the implementation process suffer because of these weaknesses. The capability of relevant institutions, particularly the IMED, must be expanded to address the attendant challenges through allocation of the required resources.

### 3.4 Challenges regarding external funded projects

In case of projects involving foreign funds, negotiations are time-consuming and pre-project initiatives including feasibility studies and land acquisition work are not well sequenced, leading to delays in getting the projects off the ground speedily.

### 3.5 Challenges related to integrity

Corruption and use of influence and discretionary powers in selection of implementing contractors and in the course of implementation also affect the quality of projects and the deliverables from the projects. Procurement anomalies, syndication and an absence of results

based monitoring undermine the cause of good governance in implementing public infrastructure projects.

#### 4 Challenges of development project planning and implementation and recommendations for improvement

The updated version of the Guidelines for Formulation, Processing, Approval and Revision of Development Schemes in the Public Sector was published in June, 2022. The guidelines contain guidance on various issues to be considered during project formulation. Apart from this, this research has identified various challenges in the implementation of the project, including Time-Over-Run and Cost-over-run. Some of the problems identified during the project formulation, implementation and post-implementation stages in the implementation of ADP in the financial year 2021-2022 and recommendations for overcoming them are given below:

**Table: Brief Summary of challenges of development projects planning and implementation and recommendations for improvement**

| Challenges                                       |   | Recommendations  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>1 Project Formulation and Approval Phase:</b> |   |  |
| 1.1  | Many projects have been complicated in implementation mainly due to weakness in project formulation. In many cases it was not possible to take expert assistance as there was no separate allocation of money for project formulation. Again, in some cases revisions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is essential to prepare design and DPP through feasibility study where applicable. However, in that case, the design prepared by the consulting firm may be verified by its own experts or specialist institutions (such as engineering universities) or third-party consulting firms;</li> <li>• A fund can be created in the revenue sector for designing and formulating DPP. The DPP can be drafted as part of the feasibility study itself. Effective steps should be taken to create efficient manpower at the organization level in project formulation.</li> </ul> |

|        |  |  |
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|        | <p>have to be made even after design and DPP formulation through feasibility study. The quality of feasibility studies is also being questioned in many cases.</p>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proper feasibility study is essential for proper project implementation. Initiatives can be taken to create specialized institutions in the public and private sectors to conduct quality feasibility studies by concerned ministries/departments/organizations. In this case, contracts can be signed with specialized educational institutions initially.</li> </ul>  |
| 1.2    | <p>In most cases the information given in the DPP about the contribution of the project to the achievement of the targets of the various planning documents is insufficient and not precise.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The DPP should specify the contribution of the project to the achievement of the targets of the various planning documents, which will later be used in project monitoring and M&amp;E.</li> </ul>  |
| 1.3    | <p>Not verifying the views/demands of the beneficiaries in taking up the project.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is necessary to formulate the project after verifying the needs of the beneficiaries in taking up the project. Ensure inclusion of beneficiary needs assessment information in sections 15.6, 16.0, and 24.0 of the Project Schedule (DPP).</li> <li>• Ensure that the project is consistent with local plans (Master Plan, Land Use Plan, Five Year Plan etc.) where applicable. A certificate to this effect may be obtained from any applicable agency.</li> <li>• The project proposal may be discussed in the upazila/district development coordination meeting.</li> </ul> |
| 13.1.4 | <p>Implementation monitoring and M&amp;E</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the DPP, the project's achievable result framework (Result Framework, Log Frame, Theory</li> </ul>   |



|     |  |  |
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|     | cannot be done properly as a result of not properly formulating the achievable result framework of the project (Result Framework, Log Frame, Theory of Change etc.) in DPP. Monitoring and M&E is not proper as baseline data is not maintained on project implementation. There are also many weaknesses in the financial/economic analysis of the project. | of Change etc.) should be formulated objectively. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline data plays an important role in project adoption and impact assessment. Various project related information needs to be stored centrally by the organization so that it can be used during project formulation.</li> <li>• Accurately calculate NPV, BCR, IRR of the project with updated information and include in DPP.</li> </ul> |
| 1.5 | In case of land acquisition before taking up the project, not taking the initial consent of the concerned district administration by identifying the possible land.  | Prior to undertaking the project, in the case of land acquisition, it is necessary to identify the potential land and take the preliminary consent of the concerned district administration. In this case, a time-bound action plan for land acquisition can be formulated and a flow chart attached to the DPP with the consent of the district administration.   |
| 1.6 | Taking up projects without following the financial ceiling of MTBF.  | Projects must be undertaken following the financial ceiling of MTBF. The DPP may be required to attach the basis calculation as evidence to the certification to this effect, which may be stored in a database (eg e-PMIS).   |
| 1.7 | Not properly formulating project   | Project outcome sustainability plan (Exit Plan/Sustainability Plan) must be formulated   |

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|      | outcome sustainability plan (exit plan/sustainability plan).  | appropriately.  |
| 1.8  | Not considering regional disparities in project adoption.   | The Planning Commission does not have enough data to take regional disparities into consideration in project uptake. In this regard, the district wise ADP allocation information can be developed in ePMIS of IMED and ADP MS database of activities department. For baseline data in this regard, General Economics Department may formulate a district-wise development index against which the district-wise ADP allocation can be compared to consider regional disparities. |
| 1.9  | Regarding design changes in the physical works of the project.  | The design of the physical works of the project (especially related to roads, bridges, railways, buildings, irrigation) often has to be changed. Different organizations need to increase their own design capacity. If the design is designed by the consultant, it should be thoroughly checked and understood, and he should be held responsible if later changes are required due to his mistakes.  |
| 1.10 | Generally foreign aided projects are not approved without guaranteeing project support. Indian loans, supplier loans, Chinese government loans were exempted in some projects, most of which could not be | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would be advisable to approve the project by ensuring foreign aid to the project.</li> <li>• Indian loans, supplier loans, Chinese government loans and such loans can be considered for hiring project management consulting firms from Bangladesh for procurement of project assets and procurement services. For this, if necessary, allotment of GOB money can be considered.</li> </ul>  |

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|      | <p>implemented on time. Later, after signing the loan agreement, it was possible to start the project only after approving the RDPP with the project aid, so that the duration of the project had to be extended a lot.</p> |   |
| 1.11 | <p>In some cases, duplication of projects was observed and unfinished projects were proposed by the Ministries.</p>   | <p>In order to avoid incomplete project proposals and duplication of projects, circulars related to formulation, processing, approval and revision of development projects in the public sector should be followed.</p> |

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| <b>2 Project Implementation Phase:</b> |   |  |
| 2.1                                    | <p>Non-implementation of projects as per action plan and procurement plan mentioned in DPP/TPP.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Necessary steps must be taken to implement the project as per action plan and procurement plan mentioned in DPP/TPP. The ePMIS software to be launched by IMED soon will ensure the provision of progress information on this subject, through which IMED will monitor the project.</li> <li>• Network diagram (CPM) needs to be prepared specifying the detailed work (Work Breakdown) of each package along with the overall Gantt chart in the work plan.</li> </ul> |

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| 2.2 | Due to lack of proper and effective planning and effective monitoring system for project issue and risk management most of the projects are experiencing unintended time delay which is one of the reasons for not implementing the project on time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed issue and risk management plan should be done at the beginning of project implementation and with annual update procedures. The ePMIS software to be launched by IED soon will ensure the creation of registers and regular progress information through which IMED will monitor the project.</li> </ul>   |
| 2.3 | Lack of coordination among project implementing agencies in project formulation and implementation at field level.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must maintain communication and coordination with other agencies involved in project formulation and implementation. Project monitoring and accountability between ministries and departments should be strengthened.</li> <li>• In the interests of proper implementation and monitoring of projects at the field level, the respective District Commissioners can be co-opted in PIC and PSC and the projects can be discussed in the District Development Coordination Meeting.</li> </ul> |
| 2.4 | Lack of transparency and accountability in project activities.   | Transparency and accountability must be ensured in all project activities. In this regard, regular monitoring of ministries, organizations, audits and IMED is essential. All inspection reports should be stored in EPMIS.  |
| 2.5 | Not holding regular PIC and Steering Committee meetings.   | In the interests of proper implementation and monitoring of the project, PIC and Steering Committee meetings should be arranged as per the resources of DPP. All minutes and inspection reports should be  |

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|     |  | stored in EPMIS and actions taken in the light of decisions should be regularly updated in the said database.  |
| 2.6 | Procrastination in procurement processing is a common feature of almost all projects. As a result, it takes about 02 to 04 years to process procurement in infrastructure development related projects depending on the sector.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officials involved in project management must acquire a certificate in procurement and processing. Incentives can be given in this regard;</li> <li>• Specialist consultants may be appointed to the project for procurement processing.</li> </ul>   |
| 2.7 | The same contracting firm cannot start and finish the work on time due to overcapacity. Besides, in many cases the main contractor sells the work to subcontractors/individuals. As a result, the quality of work is not maintained in addition to the length of the project implementation. | Effective steps should be taken to completely stop the issue of sale of work by the contractor organization that has received the work order. Procurement Rules/Regulations may be formulated to enable new contracting entities to participate in tenders (at least jointly) to create fair competition and create more new contracting entities. |
| 2.8 | The commissioned contractor company did not complete the package within the stipulated time and repeatedly applied for time extension, creating a long process in the implementation of the project.   | The contracting organization receiving the work order must ensure that the work of the package is completed within the stipulated original work order period while maintaining quality standards. For this purpose, the package time cannot be extended and the matter can be added in the PPA/PPR in this regard.                                 |
| 2.9 | There is inadequacy of laboratories and equipment required to ensure   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure provision of necessary laboratories and equipment for quality assurance of</li> </ul>  |

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|      | the quality of work related to infrastructure development projects.   | infrastructure.<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMED needs to arrange its own or contracted laboratories and necessary equipment for various tests.</li> </ul>  |
| 2.10 | Procrastination in land acquisition is also a common issue and in some cases the land acquired belongs to the forest department and there are complications in tree felling due to poor coordination. | Separate projects may be taken up to work on resettlement and eviction of illegal settlements. If that is not possible, organizations can support projects centrally by forming land acquisition and utility relocation expert teams.   |
| 2.11 | Prolonged delays in shifting utilities and complications in resettlement and eviction of illegal structures also create constant problems in the implementation of various projects.                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedules prepared by IMED should be updated regularly to properly monitor the entire process of land acquisition.</li> </ul>  |
| 2.12 | There is a lack of specific procedures for verifying and ensuring the quality of facilities or infrastructure constructed under the project.  | Specific procedures should be laid down for verifying and ensuring the quality of facilities or infrastructure constructed under the project. In this regard, to increase the technical capacity of IMED, necessary labs should be set up and skilled manpower should be arranged. As a temporary measure, technically skilled manpower can be deployed from various organizations on deputation to IMED. |
| 2.13 | Inadequate mid-term M&E of the project.   | Mid-term M&E of projects is one of the parts of project management that is currently not done properly in most cases. A mid-term  |

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|      |   | M&E of the project is required under the leadership of IMED.  |
| 2.14 | In many cases project revision proposals are sent to IMED and Planning Commission without presenting them in PIC and PSC meetings.  | It is recommended that the amendment proposal be approved at the PIC and PSC meeting before considering the project amendment proposal.   |
| 2.15 | It is mandatory to take the opinion of IMED on the eve of extension without increasing the cost of the project. However, no separate M&E or opinion of IMD is taken before considering the project amendment proposal. As a result, it is not possible to verify the actual information in many cases in the project M&E meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of separate assessment or opinion of IMED should be introduced before considering project amendment proposal.</li> <li>• Mid-term M&amp;E of all projects should be conducted under the leadership of IMED.</li> </ul> |
| 2.16 | Various organizations have manpower shortages. Many organizations are facing many problems as they do not have their own design unit (eg Bangladesh Railways). Many organizations do not even have a separate development or project monitoring unit.   | Urgent action should be taken in this regard.   |
| 2.17 | After project approval, delay in appointment of project manager, one officer serving as project manager of multiple projects, frequent change of project  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint an officer as Project Manager for 1 project and adhere to no change till completion of the project unless absolutely necessary.</li> </ul>   |

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|      | <p>manager and lack of reward and punishment system for the manpower involved in project implementation including project manager, many times lead to long process in project implementation.</p>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If an organization does not have enough manpower to appoint a single project manager, the option of recruiting from another organization or from outside may be considered.</li> <li>• The project director/project manager needs to have a system of rewards for good work and reprimands for failure or poor work.</li> <li>• Projects and project managers can be rated by IMED by assessing project performance every year to create a competitive environment for improvement.</li> </ul> |
| 2.18 | <p>Project monitoring is disrupted if the project manager is not located in the project area.</p>   | <p>Continuous project monitoring is not possible as the project manager is not stationed in the project area. As a result, many times it is not possible to complete the work according to the work plan, to ensure the quality of the work. For the smooth implementation of the project, it is necessary to keep the project manager in the project area all the time.</p>  |
| 2.19 | <p>Lack of skills in project implementation is evident. Majority of project managers and other project implementation officials reported lack of required training. Lack of incentives makes them less motivated to work.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate projects can be taken up for skill development.</li> <li>• On pilot basis, project managers can be recruited at market price through competition from government officials. In that case, a fair competition can be developed among the officers to improve their skills. The savings and returns are expected to be much higher than the costs.</li> </ul>   |



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|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IMED may consider forming a central project manager pool through necessary training and M&amp;E from which Ministries can recruit project managers based on relevant work experience and their EOI.</li> </ul>  |
| 2.20  | Various recommendations/opinions are given in the report of IMED regarding inspection, M&E, opinion regarding extension of tenure etc. No proper follow up on these recommendations/opinions;  | An effective Ministry/Department wise Action Plan can be formulated with the recommendations/opinions of various IMED reports. In the light of the measures taken on the recommendations/opinions by the Ministry/Department, it will be possible to follow up ministry wise by IMED and it will be possible to implement it in the next project inspection. |
| 2.21  | About 40% of the annual budget is spent on the implementation of the annual development program, while the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) only prioritizes revenue budgeting activities. In most cases, the APA of the Ministry/Department/Organization does not include targets for the implementation of development projects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Annual Performance Agreement (APA) should include targets for the implementation of the annual development program.</li> <li>• Specific percentage of projects of Ministries/Departments/Organizations to be completed without any Time-Overrun and Cost-Overrun can be included in the target APA.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3 Post Project Implementation Phase:</b> |  |  |
| 3.1   | Failure to follow instructions to send Project Completion Report (PCR) to IMED within three months of project completion.  | Project Completion Report (PCR) must be ensured to be sent to IMED within three months of project completion. Information on many completed projects is not available later. Organizations can make a central  |

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|     |   | database in this regard.   |
| 3.2 | A comparative financial/economic analysis is not done afresh by providing updated information to the PCR after the completion of the project.   | After the completion of the project providing updated information in PCR, new calculation of NPV, BCR, IRR and comparative analysis with DPP is required.  |
| 3.3 | Not informing IMED of PCR M&E report feedback.  | It is necessary to ensure that the objective feedback of the PCR M&E report is sent to the IMED within the prescribed time frame by the IMED.  |
| 3.4 | Inadequacy of revenue budget to carry out the activities implemented under the project at the end of the project.   | Necessary resources should be kept in the revenue budget to carry out the activities implemented under the project after the completion of the project.  |
| 3.5 | Infrastructure created under the project and equipment collected are not properly preserved and maintained after completion of the project. As a result, the service life of the infrastructure created under the project and the collected equipment is reduced. | It is necessary to ensure proper storage and maintenance of the infrastructure created and collected equipment under the project so that the service life of the infrastructure created and collected equipment is not reduced. In this regard, a sustainability plan or sustainability plan or exit plan should be kept in the DPP and project completion report. It will provide a guideline for proper preservation and maintenance of the infrastructure created under the project and equipment collected after the completion of the project and will mention the annual funding requirement. As a result, organizations will be able to easily determine the annual financial requirements for their conservation and |

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|     |   | maintenance work.  |
| 3.6 | Due to the lack of skilled manpower in the organization, after the completion of the project, it is often necessary to enter into a long-term service agreement with foreign contractors, which is a waste of government money. | After the completion of the project, it is necessary to create enough skilled manpower to manage the facilities created by the project so that LTSA (Long Term Service Agreement) with the contractor foreign organization is not necessary.   |
| 3.7 | Failure to deposit the project vehicles in the government transport pool within the stipulated time at the end of the project completion.   | According to the circular issued by the Ministry of Public Administration, after the completion of the project, it is necessary to ensure that the project vehicles are deposited in the government transport pool within the stipulated time. The relevant ministry can seriously monitor the matter. |

## 5 A framework for a functional M&E services to Ensure Good Governance in implementing development projects

A framework for a good M&E functions have been outlined in this section to ensure good governance in implementing development projects. M&E is a periodic and systematic process of assessment, consistent with principles of scientific inquiry, of public policies, strategies, programmes, projects, functions and organisations, to determine their value for Bangladeshi people. The value may be assessed in terms of relevance, outcomes, impact, sustainability, gender responsiveness, equity, or other aspects of government performance that are important to improving the lives of Bangladeshis.

The M&E system shall be guided by the fundamental principles of good governance, learning and action, sound methodology, practicality, ethics and integrity, and operational effectiveness and efficiency. The methodology of data collection and analysis needed for M&E must be transparent and conform to international standards thereby guaranteeing quality and acceptability. Timely dissemination of M&E findings to the public shall be encouraged. Participation of stakeholders in the formulation, implementation and M&E of government policies, strategies, programmes and projects shall be ensured. M&E shall be seen as a learning process whereby findings and recommendations are used to improve policy, plans and programmes. M&E efforts must be well resourced and well managed in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery,

reduce wastages in government and thus make government and administration more accountable to the people.

M&E is based on:

- M&E theory and practice;
- Sound methodology;
- Reliable data;
- Valid findings;
- Meaningful assessments;
- Useful recommendations.

M&E includes the following:

- **Inspection/investigation** that verifies information and detects wrong doing (for the purpose of control and compliance).
- **Performance audit** which, in its direct form assesses the extent to which value for-money is achieved; in its attest form provides assurance on the reliability, validity and meaningfulness of performance information produced by government Ministries and departments (for the purpose of accountability).
- **Procurement audit** which entails periodically reviewing procurement contracts, processes, and history with vendors to ensure accuracy, compliance with the terms stipulated in the contract, and improve efficiency.
- **Financial audit** which is an independent, objective assessment of an organization's financial reports and financial reporting processes. The primary purpose of financial audits is to give the organizations reasonable assurance that financial statements are reliable, accurate and complete.
- **Monitoring** which is on-going measurement and assessment of performance, i.e., intended results (for the purpose of results oriented management).
- **Performance reporting** where departments and public organisations receiving public funds report annually on their performance and reports are externally audited (for the purpose of accountability and transparency).
- **Research** which involves testing hypotheses/ propositions through observation of reality for learning (for the purpose of knowledge creation and sometimes to inform policy).
- **Review** which is a formal assessment or examination with the possibility or intention of instituting change if necessary.
- **Rapid assessment** which is an intensive, team-based qualitative inquiry using triangulation, iterative data analysis, and additional data collection to quickly develop a preliminary understanding of a situation.

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## 5.1 Categories of M&E

Based on its purpose, the M&E can be categorized as follows:

1. **Formative M&E**- includes existing in-depth monitoring and M&E conducted by IMED.
  - Definition
    - Evaluates a programme/project during implementation in order to make early improvements.
    - Helps to refine or improve a project/programme
  - Uses
    - When starting a new programme
    - To assist in the early phases of project/programme development
  - Examples
    - How well is the project/programme being delivered?
    - What strategies can we use to improve this program?
2. **Summative or Ex-Post M&E**- includes existing Project Completion Report (PCR) prepared by IMED.
  - Definition
    - Provides information on project/programme effectiveness
    - Is conducted after the completion of the programme design
  - Uses
    - To help decide whether to continue, end, or expand a project/programme
  - Examples
    - Should funding continue for this project/programme?
    - Should service expand to other project/programme in the community?
3. **Process M&E**
  - Definition
    - Focuses on project/programme implementation.
    - Determines whether specific program strategies were implemented as planned.
  - Uses
    - To determine why an established project/programme has changed over time.
    - To address inefficiencies in project/programme delivery.
    - To accurately portray project/programme operations to outside parties (e.g., for replication elsewhere).
  - Examples
    - Did your project/programme meet its goals for participant recruitment?
    - Did participants receive the specified number of service hours?
4. **Outcome M&E**- includes existing Mid-Term Review and Mid-Term M&E, and PCR conducted by IMED.
  - Definition
    - Focuses on the changes in comprehension, attitudes, behaviours, and practices that result from program activities.
    - Can include both short- and long-term results.
  - Uses
    - To decide whether an activity affected participants' outcomes.
    - To establish and measure clear benefits of the project/programme.

- Examples
  - Did your participants report the expected changes after completing a project/programme cycle?
  - What are the short- or long-term results observed among (or reported by) participants?
- 5. **Impact M&E**- includes existing Impact M&E and PCR conducted by IMED.
  - Definition
    - Focuses on long-term, sustained changes as a result of project/programme activities, both positive and negative and intended and unintended.
  - Uses
    - To influence policy.
    - To see impact in longitudinal studies with comparison groups.
  - Examples
    - What changes in your project/programme participants' behaviours are attributable to your programme?
    - What effects would project/programme participants miss out on without this programme?

## 5.2 Fundamental Principles of M&E

**Public interest:** M&E is conducted to improve people's lives, i.e., in the public interest. It provides a meaningful, empirically verifiable and rationally defensible means for evaluating policies, programmes and projects.

**Value added:** M&E provides measurable value for citizens. The value-added provides a quantifiable measure of the impact of programmes and projects.

**Knowledge generation:** M&E provides knowledge for learning. This knowledge is to be shared to the M&E practitioners within and outside the government.

**Inclusion and participation:** M&E is inclusive and participative. All stakeholders to have the opportunity to participate in monitoring & M&E and reporting of development results.

**Utilisation:** M&E is conducted with a focus on utilisation. M&E findings shall be presented and disseminated in an appropriate format and timely manner to enhance its utilization.

**Independence:** M&E is independent from management. For securing stakeholder acceptance of M&E findings, as well as commitment on follow-up actions, the independence of the M&E process is necessary.

**Impartiality:** M&E does not have a stake in its results. M&Es should be free from bias in relation to selection, conduct, findings, conclusions, recommendations and reporting.

**Objectivity:** M&E is based on objective data. Objectivity is the ability to maintain a realistic perspective and keep personal biases to a minimum, and avoid using anyone's own judgments and interpretations.

**Transparency:** M&Es are public and accessible. Ensure disclosure of information on the M&E process and findings on implementation of public policies, programmes and projects.

**Standards:** M&E adheres to professional standards. M&E standards tell us how the quality of an M&E will be judged.

**Ethics:** M&E is conducted ethically. It should promote integrity, honesty and respect in all dealings with program owners and M&E participants and in the use of M&E data.

**Quality:** M&E is assessed for quality. The quality of M&E needs to be checked at four levels: the terms of reference, the M&E process, the M&E report and dissemination and feedback of M&E.

**Rigour:** M&E methodology is sound, explicit and valid. It relate to designing, conducting and reporting M&E findings. Appropriate research methods should be followed to enhance trustworthiness and minimize researcher bias.

**Credibility:** M&E is credible. M&E should use genuine sources of data and established statistical methodologies for building trust among the stakeholders.

**Communication:** M&E results are communicated publicly, in a timely and understandable fashion. Use of M&E for decision making and evidence based policy formulation depends on the ability of the M&E community to communicate to targeted audiences clearly, precisely and succinctly.

**Value-for-money:** M&E is carried out respecting economy, efficiency and effectiveness. It is concerned with the use of public funds with least costs and maximum benefits.

**Human Rights and Gender Equality:** the two concepts of "human rights" and "gender equality" to be integrated in the design of all relevant M&Es. This would entail proper stakeholder analysis that is sensitive to HR and GE and inclusive of diverse stakeholder groups in the M&E process, designing M&E questions and indicators that take them into consideration.

### 5.3 Standards for M&E

**Utility:** Seek to ensure that an M&E will serve the information needs of intended users.

**Feasibility:** Seek to ensure that an M&E will be realistic, prudent and frugal.

**Propriety:** Seek to ensure that an M&E will be conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the M&E, as well as those affected by its results.



**Accuracy:** Seek to ensure that an M&E will reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine the significance, worth or merit of the programme being evaluated.

#### 5.4 Ethics of M&E

M&E abides by relevant professional and ethical guidelines and codes of conduct for individual evaluators. M&E is undertaken with integrity and honesty.

Commissioners, M&E managers and evaluators respect human rights and differences in culture, customs, religious beliefs and practices of all stakeholders.

Evaluators are mindful of gender roles, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation, language and other differences when designing and carrying out the M&E.

#### **Competence:**

- Evaluators are to be competent in their provision of service.
- Evaluators should apply systematic methods of inquiry appropriate to the M&E.
- Evaluators should possess or provide content knowledge appropriate for the M&E.
- Evaluators should continuously strive to improve their methodological and practice skills.

#### **Integrity:**

- Evaluators are to act with integrity in their relationships with all stakeholders.
- Evaluators should accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge.
- Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to clients before embarking on an M&E project and at any point where such conflict occurs. This includes conflict of interest on the part of either evaluator or stakeholder.
- Evaluators should be sensitive to the cultural and social environment of all stakeholders and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to this environment.
- Evaluators should confer with the client on contractual decisions such as: confidentiality; privacy; communication; and, ownership of findings and reports.

#### **Accountability:**

- Evaluators are to be accountable for their performance and their product.
- Evaluators should be responsible for the provision of information to clients to facilitate their decision-making concerning the selection of appropriate M&E strategies and methodologies. Such information should include the limitations of selected methodology.
- Evaluators should be responsible for the clear, accurate, and fair, written and/or oral presentation of study findings and limitations, and recommendations.
- Evaluators should be responsible in their fiscal decision-making so that expenditures are accounted for and clients receive good value for their dollars.

- Evaluators should be responsible for the completion of the M&E within a reasonable time as agreed to with the clients. Such agreements should acknowledge unprecedented delays resulting from factors beyond the evaluator's control.

## 5.5 Management Response

The management response is required for IMED to respond to the findings and recommendations of all M&E reports, and prepare a management response, either accepting the results or indicating where they disagree, and providing reasons in the case of disagreement. The final M&E report will have management response attached as one of its appendices.

## 5.6 Institutional Arrangements

- 1) The IMED has responsibilities for the M&E function in the government, under the Direction of the Minister of Planning. The IMED will continue to implement (i) Periodic M&E, (ii) Project Completion Report (PCR), (iii) Impact M&E, and (iv) Special M&Es such as for Fast-track Projects, during no-cost extension of projects and revision of projects. For all second phase projects, M&E of first phase is mandatory.
- 2) IMED will follow-up on the implementation of all project complementary audits, performance audits, and resolution of recommendations of all audits, against timelines established by the implementing Ministry.
- 3) IMED will maintain an electronic database of all M&Es conducted by it. GED will share the final electronic version of all M&Es conducted by it with the IMED within one week of their completion.
- 4) A Project M&E Directorate with adequate manpower and sub-national presence at the regional level will steer M&E function with additional capacity and volume.
- 5) The Ministry of Planning will constitute a high-level Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation of the National M&E Policy under the aegis of the Ministry of Planning. The Committee will be chaired by the Minister of Planning, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Committee will hold six-monthly meetings, i.e., two meetings per year.
- 6) The Ministry of Planning will constitute an In-depth and Ex-post M&E Committee (IEEC) to provide advice to the Minister responsible for M&E on the government's M&E policy, its assessment, its implementation and make recommendations. The Committee will be Co-chaired by the Secretary, IMED and Secretary, GED and may be constituted of representatives of the line Ministries. The IEEC will be supported in its work by IMED and GED officers.
- 7) The Secretary, Minister of Planning recommends and justifies to the Minister of Planning for M&E on an annual basis, a rolling 2-year M&E plan, with rationale, purpose, expected value-added, approach, methodology outline, budget and timeline. The rolling 2-year plan is developed

in close consultation with the Ministries involved, including external development and financing partners where appropriate.

8) The Minister of Planning may refer to the IEEC, for advice, on an annual basis, the rolling 2-year M&E plan submitted by the Secretary, Minister of Planning.

9) The Minister of Planning submits annually for discussion and approval to the Cabinet Division the rolling 2-year M&E plan with recommendations from the IEEC.

10) Funding for M&E comes from the annual revenue budget and may also include external financing.

11) An assessment of IMED, GED and Ministries staff strength and their M&E capacities will be undertaken based on which adequate personnel will be put in place.

12) The sustainability of the M&E function in government is supported by adequate capacity for the implementation of the National M&E Policy.

13) A publicly accessible e-library of all M&Es conducted in Bangladesh is managed by the IMED.

14) All M&Es conducted by IMED and GED for externally funded projects, for coordination, participation, assurance of consistency with the National M&E Policy, compliance with M&E standards, quality assurance, inclusion in the government M&E plan and in the public e-library of M&Es in Bangladesh, will be coordinated with External Resources Division (ERD) and relevant external partners.

15) All M&E reports are made public in a manner that is accessible to citizens.

16) The M&E function of the government of Bangladesh is peer reviewed on an appropriate periodic basis; in this perspective, a report is produced and presented to the Minister responsible for M&E. The report is made public.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

ADP implementation and role of government in enhancing economic development has become synonymous in context of Bangladesh. Inefficient use of public money has a huge welfare cost is likely to worsen the welfare of the country. Failure in completing development projects in time and within budget has for long impacted the economy as delayed implementation adds to project costs. The size of the ADP has increased geometrically and so has the challenges. These challenges need to be addressed for efficient management of the projects and thus for the overall economic development.

There are some factors which may improve the efficiency of the process for proper implementation of ADP in Bangladesh. Section five of this paper has identified the challenges and also highlighted the proposed measure to be undertaken to improve the situation. Some of those are briefly mentioned below:

- ADP implementation should be proper and there may have less flexibility of revision of ADP. Some projects are national priorities and it may implement under ADP in block allocation without disturbing the main ADP.
- To ensure value addition for people most of the projects must attain outcome instead of output. Only socially acceptable, economically feasible and environmentally sustainable project can ensure the 'value for people'. So, starting from inception of a project must maintain social acceptability criteria.
- Approval of the project should be in due time and proper preparation of DPP and need to modify even in initial stage is utmost necessary.
- Release of fund in time, adequate allocation of fund and in lining up / allocation and reimbursement of foreign aid should be the high priority of the initial stage of the project.
- All sorts of building materials, land, power supply, procurement, customs clearance and other utilities should be ensured at the time of implementation of the project.
- Proper and timely decision and supervision and control by agency, coordination and cooperation
- among departments should be monitor in time and proper way.
- Strengthening the Planning wing of the Administrative Ministries is almost urgent for success of any project. Compulsory feasibility study is needed for large social sectors projects also. Involvement of representatives of local people in project selection and stopping of misuse of project vehicles and equipment from within and outside should be closely monitored. Use of project implementation techniques by the project management should be enhanced and to realize the cost of the projects from the beneficiaries' point of view is really essential to observed.
- Timely recruitment and training of manpower of a project to strengthening of the ERD with combination of relaxation of rules/ regulations should be ensured. Appointment of a full time Project Director right from the project preparation stage is always to be required.

The initiatives undertaken by concerned authorities in recent times in the areas of release of funds, land acquisition, retention of project directors and public procurement must be continued and further strengthened. Last but not the least, the IMED's institutional capacities must be expanded adequately, through adequate allocation of needed resources for it to be able to undertake its mandated tasks.

## 5 References

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*To be updated*