

Access to Information (a2i-II) Programme  
**Final Project Review Report**



**DECEMBER 2019**



**Cabinet  
Division**  
Government of the People's  
Republic of Bangladesh



**ICT  
DIVISION**

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Final Project Review Report 1

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## Executive Summary

In order to transform Digital Bangladesh into a reality and implement the vision of the government of Bangladesh, a2i has constantly the pioneer forerunner which has not only changed the scenario of public service delivery in Bangladesh, also enabled the citizens of all walk to avail public services at their fingertips contributing to the actualization of Digital Bangladesh. A true delineation of the contribution of a2i in achieving Digital Bangladesh was exposed in the comments of *Advisor to Honorable Prime Minister on Information and Communications Technology Mr. Sajeeb Wazed Joy e.i.* “Ten years ago, when we started, nothing was digitized in Bangladesh. We were completely a technologically backward country. Today no one questions Digital Bangladesh. Now digital Bangladesh is a reality. While the vision of Digital Bangladesh has been mine, but a2i has been a crucial pioneer for implementing the visions of Digital Bangladesh.” The journey of 10 years has been arduous but triumphant. The primary steps in this venture has been “Continuous initiation of new and improved Digital services and “Ensuring the readiness of service providers.”

Throughout the project phase, a2i has launched some significant digital services which has changed the way of public service delivery of Bangladesh. In partnership with relevant government ministries and agencies, a2i commenced initiatives targeted towards bringing improved and simplified government services through diversified service access points. The goal was to ensure simplified accessible public services for every citizen of Bangladesh through several service access points such as web, physical and telecom based. *UNDP Administrator, Mr. Achim Steiner* rightly said that “a2i – a wonderful cutting-edge example of how an innovation that began in part of the UNDP family actually has today become one of the great examples of how to use digital technologies and platforms to reach literally the last citizen in a community in a nation...”.

In order to provide simplified services delivered to citizens accurately, ensuring the readiness of the service providers and capacitating them was mandatory. a2i has made significant contribution in this regard by conducting numerous training sessions and capacity development programs resulting in enhanced skill and capacity of the service providers enabling them to serve the citizen in an efficient manner.

The findings of this Final Project Review Report point to noteworthy achievements of a2i-II (2012-2019); and the whole-of-government approach adopted by a2i which has reinforced governance performance at national as well as local level. This report focuses at the innovative groundbreaking initiatives of a2i in more than 8 years which has not only enabled the citizens to avail public services through diversified access points also brought about a digital revolution across the country ultimately striding a giant step towards implementing the vision of Digital Bangladesh. Access of underserved communities to public services simplified and digitized catalyzed by a2i. To make the services available to the citizens’ doorsteps at low cost to ensure hassle-free service delivery, a2i has been leveraging the usage of ICT in order to enable the citizens to avail services with just a click of their fingertips. 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. The activities of the a2i-II resulted in reduction of total 1.92 billion days, 8.14 billion USD and 1 Billion visits for citizen to avail public services. To make the services available very quickly to the citizens' doorsteps at low cost to ensure hassle-free service delivery, 424 services have been simplified. The e-mutation has been reached to more than 400 upazilla offices. As a part of e-Office implementation, e-filing has been expanded to more than 7000 govt. offices. More than 80 million e-files have been disposed-off through the system. Websites of more than 46,500 offices have been added to the National Portal. More than 5 million contents have been added to this portal. To resolve public complaints and queries, almost 4 million calls have been received from the 333 call centre. Till now more than 15,000 social problems have been solved by this call centre. Among them more than 4 thousand early marriages have been stopped. a2i has been able to develop an innovation culture within the public administration system and among the civil servants, which has significantly altered the traditional mechanism of the government agencies leading upto increased effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

This initiatives have contributed to the event that Bangladesh has significantly moved forward in the ranking of UN E-Government Development Index and secured 51st place in the E-Participation Index. a2i is preparing skilled manpower based on market demand and re-inventing the image and branding of Technical and Vocational Education and Training to make it more appealing to the youth. A2i also catalyzes affirmative action in favour of marginalized and disadvantaged groups which are critical to the new sustainable development framework. Institutional and incentive frameworks developed to promote innovative service delivery mechanisms. Linkages established with public and private sectors and awareness created among the citizens. Through initiatives such as Muktopaath, Teacher's Portal, quality education has been ensured for learners of all walks.

a2i has developed strong institutional partnerships with all relevant Ministries, Divisions, other National Agencies and Universities along with civil society and private sector. These partnerships 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 co-funding through local budgetary provisions, which the programme encouraged, is expected to continue to enable continuance of ongoing programme activities on ground. Besides a2i has contributed to bring about the policy level transformative changes that will continue furthering e-governance and innovation objectives. Capacitating a2i partners at all levels: Ministries/Divisions, Districts and sub-District levels, through planned effusion of organizational competences and good practices of a2i to its partners will eventually transfer the projects for mainstreaming by respective Ministries and Divisions.

a2i Project has been successful to achieve a pragmatic operating mechanism which has unfold numerous possibilities for the citizen of Bangladesh to not only avail best public service at the tips of their fingertips, also delivered significant progress towards achieving the digital development ambitions of the country.

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| USD           | U.S. Dollar                              |
| BDT           | Bangladesh Taka                          |
| a2i           | Access to Information                    |
| 4IR           | Fourth Industrial Revolution             |
| E- Government | Electronic government                    |
| G2P           | Government to Person                     |
| GoB           | Government of Bangladesh                 |
| HR            | Human Resource                           |
| ICT           | Information and Communication Technology |
| e-Service     | Electronic Service                       |
| iLab          | Innovation Lab                           |
| ITEX          | Innovation & Technology Exhibition       |
| e-office      | Electronic Office                        |
| M&E           | Monitoring and Evaluation                |
| MFS           | Mobile Financial Services                |
| MIS           | Management information system            |
| MMC           | Multimedia Classroom                     |
| MoU           | Memorandum of Understanding              |
| MOWCA         | Ministry of Women and Children Affairs   |
| NGO           | Non-Governmental Organizations           |
| P2G           | Person to Government                     |
| PMO           | Prime Minister's Office                  |
| SDG           | Sustainable Development Goal             |
| AIF           | A2i Innovation Fund                      |
| SMS           | Short Message Service                    |
| SPS           | Service Process Simplification           |
| USSD          | Unstructured Supplementary Service Data  |
| SSN           | Social Safety Net                        |
| SSNP          | Social Safety Net Programme              |
| TCV           | Time-Cost-Visits                         |
| UDC           | Union Digital Centre                     |
| UN            | United Nations                           |
| UNDP          | United Nations Development Program       |
| WSIS          | World Summit on the Information Society  |

## 1. Background:

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Project Title                 | Access to Information (II) – e-Service delivery for transparency and responsiveness  |
| Project Period                | April 2012-December 2019   |
| Project Areas                 | Whole Bangladesh   |
| Beneficiaries                 | 43.5 Million   |
| Project ID (Atlas)            | 00045483   |
| Objective of the Project      | Government institutions 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.  |
| Stakeholders                  | Government of Bangladesh, Private Sectors, Academia, NGOs, INGOs, Development Partners etc.  |
| CPD Outcome/Output            | (CPD Outcome 1). Inclusive and sustainable growth and development (Output 1.1). The Government has knowledge and skills to better target remaining pockets of poverty and expand opportunities for women to contribute to and benefit from economic progress<br>(CPD 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.<br>(Output 2.3). The Government has the capacity to develop policies and carry out sectoral and geographical interventions in districts where inequality of progress is evident.  |
| UNDAF Output                  | Output 3.2. Policies harmonized for improved governance and ensuring equity of national, urban and rural social protection programmes<br>Output 3.3: National and subnational capacity improved for evidence-based decision making for budget allocation, public finance management, and performance monitoring  |
| Strategic Plan Outcome/Output | SP Outcome 1: Advance poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions<br>Output 1.1.1: Capacities developed across the whole of government to integrate the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and other international agreements in development plans and budgets, and to analyze progress towards the SDGs, using innovative and data-driven solutions<br>Output 1.1.2: Marginalised groups, particularly the poor, women, people with disabilities and displaced are empowered to gain universal access to basic services and financial and non-financial assets to build productive capacities and benefit from sustainable livelihoods and jobs<br>SP Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development<br>Output 2.1.2: Capacities developed for progressive expansion of inclusive social protection systems<br>Output 2.2.1: Use of digital technologies and big data enabled for improved public services and other government functions |
| SDG Goal/Target               | (SDG Goal 1) Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere<br>(SDG Target 1.3) Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable<br>(SDG Goal 4) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all<br>(SDG Target 4.4) By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship<br>(SDG Goal 8) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all<br>(SDG Target 8.10) Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all   |



|  |
|--|
| (SDG Goal 16) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels<br>(SDG Target 16.6) Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels |
|--|



Access to Information (a2i-II) Programme is a joint programme of ICT Division of Bangladesh government and UNDP Bangladesh that expedites a citizen-centric culture of innovation in civil service to enable the citizens to avail more inclusive, affordable, reliable and easier to access services by improving public service delivery. The impact of a2i programme has brought tremendous positive socio-economic and sustainable development that has become a role model to many developing countries. Due to the unique and successful contributions in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery and underserved people's lives, the project implementation strategies and concepts followed by a2i are now internationally recognized, followed, funded and awarded.

Access to Information (a2i-II) Programme is one of the key drivers of the Government of Bangladesh's public service innovation agenda. Whilst improving the social and economic welfare of its citizens by providing information and services is a fundamental government responsibility, it is also critical to expand the breadth and width of such simplified services. a2i improves the service delivery model to enable the citizens to avail government information and services in a simplified, low cost and timely manner. In this backdrop, a2i leverages Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery and bring them close to citizens- at their fingertips and doorsteps. Executed by the ICT Division of the Government of Bangladesh, with support from the United Nations Development

Program (UNDP) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a2i strives to unfold the true potential within the government to create remarkable innovation that can ease and improve lives of the citizens.

a2i commenced its journey in 2007 with the objective of increasing transparency, improving governance and public services and reducing inefficiencies in government service delivery to the under-served communities in Bangladesh. The project successfully illustrated that, if utilized correctly, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be a powerful tool to empower populations by reducing costs, corruption and inefficiencies and improving quality, transparency and promoting access to government services. Building on the lessons learnt from the first phase, a2i entered into its second phase in 2012. The core program strategy of the second phase is focused on service decentralization to bring government services closer to citizens, develop capacity of service providing institutions and individuals to innovate and re-engineer 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. Considering the maturity, volume/scope of the project, recently, the government has undertaken the initiative of shifting 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 1 July 2018. Thus, a2i is now considered as a full-fledged program of the ICT Division.

## 2. Progress of a2i-II

### 2.1. Progress against planned outcomes

| Project Output Indicators  | Baseline    | Target (December 2019) | Achievement (till December 2019) | % of Achievement |
|--|-------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| <b><i>Expected Output 01: Access of underserved communities to public administrative services enhanced and simplified through electronic means</i></b>   |             |                        |                                  |                  |
| 1.1 Number of beneficiaries availing e-Services  | 0.5 million | 40 million             | 43.50 million                    | 108.75%          |
| 1.2 Number of services simplified  | 270         | 450                    | 600                              | 133.33%          |
| 1.3 Number of e- services under Land Information and Service Framework   | 2           | 8                      | 5                                | 62.50%           |
| 1.4 Number of land related e-services provided from service access points  | 1           | 8                      | 5                                | 98.78%           |
| <b><i>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</i></b> |             |                        |                                  |                  |

|  |                                 |                          |                          |         |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------|
| 2.1 Number of service providers trained/oriented to design and implement e-services  | 3,000                           | 20,000                   | 31,450                   | 157.25% |
| 2.2 Number of 'Innovation Prototypes' initiated/completed/ scaled-up by the government officials   | 300                             | 1600                     | 1,589                    | 99.31%  |
| <b>Expected Output 03: Enabling legal and policy framework designed and partnerships established to facilitate responsive and transparent service delivery</b> |                                 |                          |                          |         |
| 3.1 Number of policies, rules and technical standards related to e- service delivery adopted   | 13                              | 30                       | 35                       | 116.67% |
| 3.2 Number of e/m- payment enabled government service  | 2                               | 16                       | 16                       | 100.00% |
| 3.3 TCV required for G2P and P2G fund transfer for specific services   | T=4.5 Hrs.<br>C=BDT 76<br>V=1.2 | T=58%.<br>C=30%<br>V=80% | T=58%.<br>C=30%<br>V=80% | 100.00% |
| 3.4 Number of Digital Centres providing Agent Banking Service at union level   | 0                               | 4,554                    | 3,900                    | 85.64%  |
| <b>Expected Output 04: Institutional and incentive frameworks developed to promote innovative service delivery mechanisms</b>                                  |                                 |                          |                          |         |
| 4.1 New agency for service delivery innovation with a sustainable organizational model established   | 0 Step                          | 5 Step                   | 3 Step                   | 60%     |
| 4.2 Number of projects funded through Innovation Fund  | 62                              | 250                      | 247                      | 98.80%  |
| 4.3 Number of SIF projects piloted successfully by relevant government offices   | 1                               | 30                       | 38                       | 126.67% |
| <b>Expected Output 05: Linkages established with public and private sectors and awareness created among the citizens</b>                                       |                                 |                          |                          |         |
| 5.1 Average distance to service accessible points from citizen (in KM)   | 5.5 km                          | 4 km                     | 4 km                     | 100.00% |
| 5.2 Number of service access points established  | 5,275                           | 5,275                    | 5,865                    | 100.46% |

|  |             |             |             |               |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| 5.3 Average number of services provided from Digital Centres every month | 4.5 million | 6.5 million | 6.5 million | 100.00%       |
| 5.4 Proportion of citizens satisfied to the service access points        | 33%         | 80%         | 61%         | 76.25%        |
| <b>Overall Achievement</b>   |             |             |             | <b>99.30%</b> |

### 3. Achievement of a2i

#### 3.1. Contribution of a2i in UNDAF outcome

| Outcome   | a2i's Contribution  |
|---|---|
| Develop and implement improved social policies and programmes that focus on good governance, reduction of structural inequalities and advancement of vulnerable individuals and groups. | a2i has significantly contributed towards enabling government agencies Civil society, interest groups and political parties with tools such as e-filing, national portal, digitalization of government systems etc along with capacitating them in order to increase their knowledge. It has expedited the process of setting agendas and develop platforms for building consensus on national issues. a2i has launched specific initiatives for the wellbeing of disable, traditionally excluded group of people, minorities and women and children reducing structural inequalities and advancement of vulnerable individuals and groups. |

#### 3.2. Contribution of a2i in CPD outcome

| Outcome   | a2i's Contribution   |
|---|--|
| Civil society, interest groups, relevant government agencies and political parties' have tools and knowledge to set agendas and to develop platforms for building consensus on national issues. | a2i has significantly contributed towards enabling government agencies Civil society, interest groups and political parties with tools such as e-filing, national portal, digitalization of government systems etc along with capacitating them in order to increase their knowledge. It has expedited the process of setting agendas and develop platforms for building consensus on national issues. |
| The Government has the capacity to develop policies and carry out sectoral and geographical interventions in districts where inequality of progress is evident.                                 | With a2i's remarkable initiatives, civil servants have been capacitated through several training sessions along with capacity development programs which has enabled them to develop policies and carry out sectoral and geographical interventions in districts where inequality of progress is evident. a2i has  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | targeted citizens of the entire country resulting in reducing inequality. |
|--|---|

**3.3. Innovations towards Achieving SDGs**

To create the scope for ICT intervention in Designing Implementation Framework on specific 7 thematic areas of SDGs, a2i has conducted the ICT4SDGs Workshop. a2i has also ensured the enrichment of SDG tracker data by successfully engaging all data providing Ministries/Departments/Organizations.

In order to capacitate government agencies and align their activities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), comprehensive SDG monitoring framework is required so that it can be ensured that efforts are guided, and resources are directed precisely. For this purpose, a2i programme in collaboration with Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics have developed “SDG Tracker” which is intended to create an effective, more visualized scheme, user friendly for all as well as demand-based online data repository for or monitoring the implementation of SDGs, strengthening timely data collection and improving situation analysis and performance monitoring of achieving the SDGs along with other national development goals. It is an effective tool to powerful and innovative tool having wider scope of inducing correlation among multiple indicators, target setting and progress tracking, disaggregation of all available data, SDG localization, etc. a2i programme, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the general economics division of the Planning Commission had been jointly ensuring application of this SDG tracker along with all concerned ministries. The tracker helps the government agencies to monitor and analyze the statistical data and information related to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure balanced allocation of limited resources. Furthermore, Data authentication and data quality is ensured through this portal. Currently, 88 data providing agencies of Bangladesh are providing data to SDG tracker. Already 144 indicators have been updated eradicating the barriers faced. The analytics developed from the statistics of the Tracker is helping policy analysts to take development decisions since five thematic area-wise Analytics have already been developed. Furthermore, SDG Tracker is the vital data repository for SDGs implementation in Bangladesh as it stores country’s all data.

With various initiatives, a2i has made significant contribution to the achievement of SDG GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. Under Digital Financial Inclusion Services, 21 digital government services have been integrated in the e-Challan System. Through the G2P system, more than 1.5 million beneficiaries of the social safety net programme have availed digital services. The goal is to ensure citizen-centered, secure and interoperable digital financial eco-system that deepens financial inclusion and offers innovative, accessible and affordable pro-poor financial services. Through the Apprenticeship Management System, a2i is arranging skill-based training programmes for the youth with the purpose of capacity development and arrangement of decent employment. I-Lab has been providing technical and financial support to innovators of

the projects related to social and national issues. In addition, there are 20 innovative projects under the a2i Innovation Fund aimed at achieving SDG targets.

a2i has implemented a e-Commerce platform called 'ekShop' targeting rural entrepreneurs through which almost 1300 rural producers have been facilitated.

a2i has successfully embarked upon the achievement of GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions. The programme has profoundly reduced TCV of service recipients by providing public services from Digital Centres. More than 460 million public services are being provided from 5,865 digital centres. e-Filing system has been introduced to provide prompt, transparent, and efficient service to the government and to create a paperless environment-friendly public office. As a part of e-Office implementation, e-filing has been expanded to about total 6000+ offices and more than 85 thousand govt. officials have started using e-File and more than 08 million files have been disposed-off through the nothi system. National Portal of Bangladesh is the largest portal of the world which connects 46k government offices. At present, this portal contains more than 5 million contents which are checked and updated constantly with the goal of providing the citizen with accurate and accessible government services and information within a concise cost and time. Currently the portal connects 600+ e-services, 1 million+ directory and 1,688 forms to ensure the easy access of citizen to public services. Information on Land records and surveys of 53 Districts with 1 crore+ Khatian have been stored in the system. 4M+ applications have been disposed among 126 thousand applications. . About 1.5 million citizens have been benefited from obtaining services through e-Mutation. a2i introduced e-Mutation service to provide citizen responsive, hassle-free land service with the use of ICT in improving the operation of land administration. The e-mutation has been introduced to 485 upazillas and connected more than 4,560 offices. More than 800 thousand cases have been disposed-off through the e-mutation system. Every citizen of Bangladesh can now avail the services of Bangladesh National Portal from the national call centre 333. a2i has created Agriculture Portal and Agri Help line 3331 through which 8 million farmers have received services and have been empowered. To foster innovation culture among civil servants, a2i has initiated empathy training and till now 35,000 civil servants have received training and almost 1.6 thousand innovative projects have completed piloting phase.

In order to achieve SDG target 4: Quality Education, a2i has developed Kishore Konnect for the adolescent girls and boys under which almost 3 million adolescent students have been connected and more than 25 thousand contents have been developed. a2i has also developed the largest e-learning platform Muktopath with the vision of ensuring quality education for everyone including the traditionally excluded members of the society. MuktoPaath currently has more than 200+ thousand registered members and total graduate from MuktoPaath is more than 165 thousand. Currently there are more than 136 Courses in the platform. Approximately, 3,94,000 teachers are registered in the teacher's portal with the access to more than 4,00,000 content.

In the alignment of GOAL 5: Gender Equality, a2i has launched Women's Innovation Camp to empower women innovators, encourage women to participate in technology field and solve

women centric national problems. The programme has been arranged 3 times and in total 10 projects have been funded. A2i is also aiming at solving social issues such as gender violence and child marriage through a2i innovation fund projects and 333.

#### **4. Achievement of major initiatives of a2i**

##### **4.1. Expected Output 1: Access of underserved communities to public administrative services enhanced and simplified through electronic means.**

##### **4.1.1. Government services at citizen's doorstep: Digital Centre**

To eradicate the need of underserved citizens to travel great distances, incur high cost and endure the hassle of accessing government services, digital centres were established all across the country. It delivers hundreds of public services to the underserved citizens more easily, economically and reliably through One-Stop Centres. These are a hallmark achievement of the government's Digital Bangladesh vision, which envisages using them to provide all public and private



services to rural citizens. Digital Centres leverage modern technology to provide citizens, both free and fee-based access to public services (land records, birth registration, telemedicine, life insurance, passport and overseas job application as well as application to various other government services) and private services (mobile financial services, insurance, various types of computer and vocational training, etc.). Increasingly, the Digital Centres are catalyzing financial inclusion through agent banking and connecting low-income communities to the wider digital economy through Assisted Rural E-Commerce. The Digital Centres ensure that the underserved such as rural women, people with disabilities and the elderly – regardless of their literacy and ICT literacy – can access vital information and services. Moreover, the entrepreneurs brought new ideas for delivering the public and private services, including the e-Commerce services, tailoring to the local needs.

One of the most innovative aspects of the Digital Centre is the public-private entrepreneurship model. The entrepreneurs are earning from the centres by rendering services to the citizens. In 2018, 71% entrepreneurs earned USD 125+ per month. The increased amount of earning has ensured the progress of the sustainability of the Digital Centres along with motivating, empowering and improving the livelihood of the entrepreneurs. Other factors that have contributed to the improvement of income are a2i-District Administration, coordination at District level workshop, capacity development of the entrepreneurs, collaboration of Local Govt, service integration, regular communication, Agent Banking and ek-Shop.

In 2016, Digital Center received the prestigious WSIS Award arranged by the specialized organization of the United Nations- ITU.

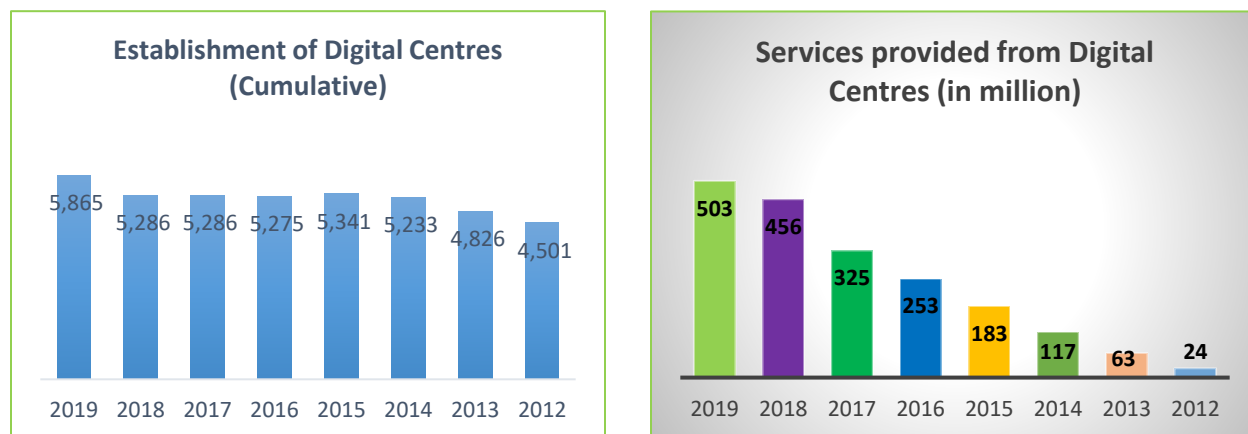


Figure 1: Establishment of Digital Centres throughout the years & Services provided from Digital Centres

It can be depicted from figure 1 that number of digital centres and services provided has been increased throughout the year.

In Total 5865 Digital Centres were established across the country from which 503 million services were rendered. 150+ services are provided from digital centres. Digital centres comprised of there are 11,000 entrepreneurs in total Entrepreneurs among which Male Entrepreneurs are 6000 and Female Entrepreneurs are 5000.

#### Case Study:1- Empowering women to be self-dependent: how the digital center is transforming the lives of women

“I have created an identity for myself thanks to a2i’s Union Digital Center. The same people who frowned at me once, see me as an example today,” says a proud Rani, entrepreneur at a local Union Digital Centre (UDC).

Orphaned since childhood, Rani was raised by her relatives who refused to look after her following her university graduation. Desperate to find a way of earning her livelihood, Rani found out about the Union Digital Centre. With a positive attitude, determination and a strong will to learn, she took it upon herself to aptly learn how to use a computer. She excelled in her mission and has even started training people on how to use a computer. She has since become an entrepreneur in one of a2i’s digital centers and now earns BDT 25,000 per month.

Just like Rani, thousands of poor and underserved female inhabitants of rural areas have been empowered by Union Digital Centers which have provided ample opportunities of entrepreneurship to citizens. It has remarkably improved the living standards of the





and information that can be added to this platform, the number of service recipients will increase simultaneously. By providing government services to citizens, more revenue will be generated from this process which will help in creating other areas of development.

The National Portal has received WSIS Awards in 2015 and Open Group Award in 2017.

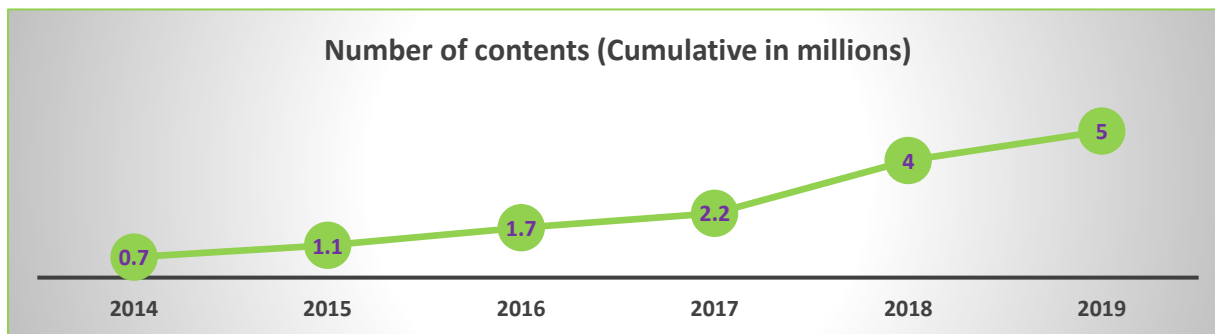


Figure 2: Number of contents uploaded in National portal

Figure 2 depicts that the number of contents made available in the National portal has significantly increased throughout the years.

#### 4.1.4. National Information Hotline: 333

Access to Information (a2i) Programme introduced National Information Hotline ‘333’ and ensuring services at the doorsteps of citizen and as part of implementing Digital Bangladesh or Vision- 2021. 333 has started its journey on April 12, 2018 to provide 24/7 services to the citizen. It is a linked call centre of National Portal in partnership with Robi and Genex where anyone can dial 333 and



**333 at a glance:**

Total calls received - 3,950,011  
 Social challenges solved - 15,402  
 Child Marriages stopped - 4,575

receive information regarding public services, contact information of people’s representatives and government employees, tourist attractions of different areas, complain against any social issue and be informed about detailed information about different Districts. Apart from providing information and services, this call center will be used as a medium of promoting public services. This call center eventually will bring every citizen

of the country under the coverage of public services. This will effectively reduce citizen's time, cost and hassle in receiving information on public services and remedy to social problems.

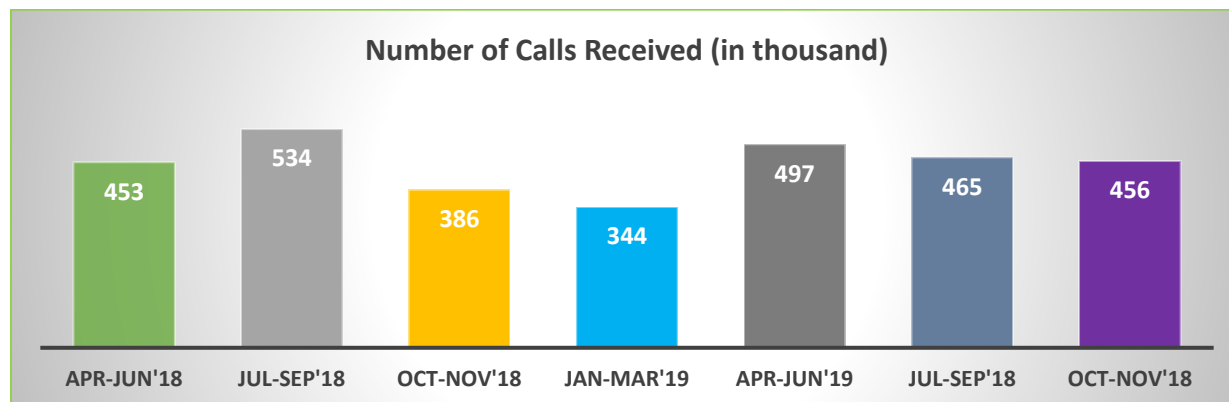


Figure 3: Number of calls received in 333

#### Case Study 2: '333' and its efforts to protect underage girls from forceful marriage

An 8th grader with her entire life in front of her, Dola's hopes and dreams were about to be shattered at a tender age of 14 when her father set her marriage with a CNG driver more than twice her age. . Student of a local high school in Maligacha, a remote village in Pabna Sadar Upazila, Dola had dreams of reaching a respectable position in life and was performing well in her studies. The news of her marriage however, put her goals in jeopardy.

With the date of her marriage fast approaching, Dola rushed to Hasina Akter, an NGO worker as a last resort. As Hasina was well informed and knew about '333', she helped Dola call the helpline and explain her situation. The agent at the receiver's end immediately relayed the information to the Deputy Commissioner of the Pabna District Administration and the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Pabna. The latter spontaneously made the trip to Dola's village home with police and some local representatives in order to stop the marriage. When the UNO explained the laws concerning child marriage and its consequences, Dola's parents agreed to stop the marriage and give their word that they wouldn't marry their child off before the age of 18.

"It felt like I found new life after my marriage was prevented. Thanks to '333', I can get back to focusing on my studies and continue to dream of the life I have always wished for", says a relieved Dola. Around 3,000 such marriages have been stopped thus far.

*The Access to Information (a2i) Programme of the ICT Division supported by the Cabinet Division and UNDP has initiated the national help centre, 333, to provide citizens with information on procedures of receiving public services. Anyone can dial helpline 333 from anywhere and receive information about government offices/ officers, tourist attractions, 64 districts and redressal of different social problems like child marriage. This helpline is accessible 24/7 and it allows Non-Resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) to receive various services as well. Within a short amount of time, more than 3000 child marriages have been stopped with the help of 333.*

#### 4.1.5. Paperless Government office: e-Filing System

Nothi or e-File is a procedure of electronic document management system to provide services of every government office from the field level to ministry office to citizens' doorstep that replaces conventional manual system. e-Filing system has been introduced to provide prompt, transparent, and efficient service to the government and to create a paperless environment-friendly public office. In this system, received letters, proposed notes on Nothi, accepted decisions, enforced letters, positions of Nothi, information on registered and various references are recorded in the data system and anyone will be able to monitor data instantly. Anyone such as service recipients or service provider can be able to access this Nothi system through any website of National Portal or Nothi.

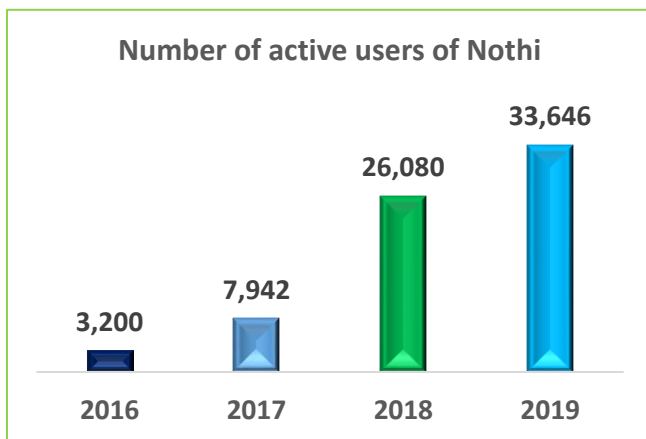
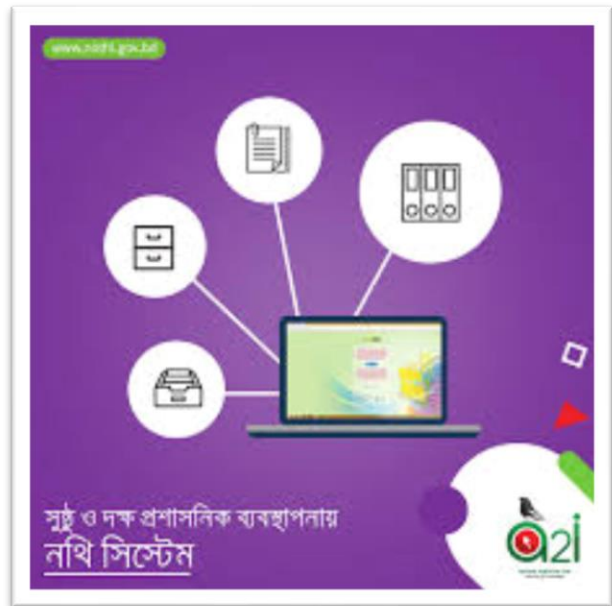


Figure 4: Number of users of Nothi

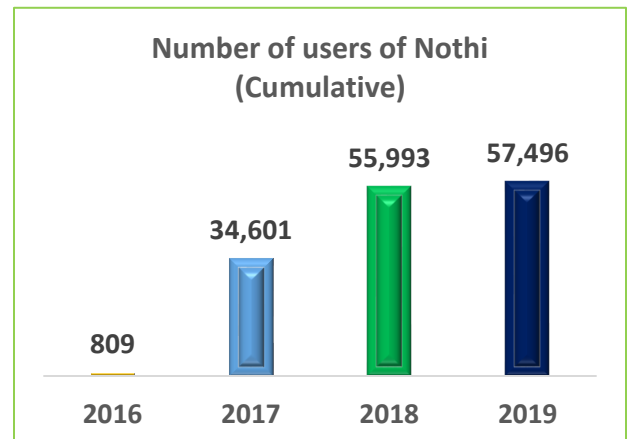


Figure 5: Number of active users of Nothi

Figure 4 & 5 depicts that the Users and active users of Nothi has significantly increased throughout the years.

Till 2018, remarkably 55,993 govt. officials have used e-File against the target of 80,000 in 2018 and 3.99 million files have been disposed of through nothi system. It can be seen that the number

of e-Nothi users are increasing. Total 4,365 government offices have used e-Nothi till 2018. This e-Filing system has been awarded WSIS Award in 2015 and Open Group Award in 2017.

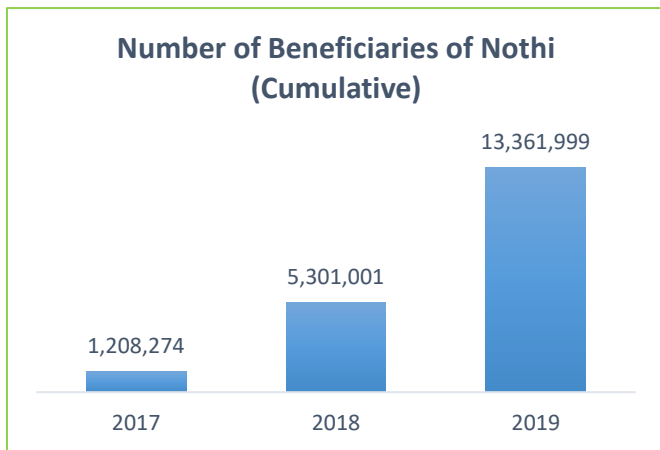


Figure 6: Number of beneficiaries of Nothi

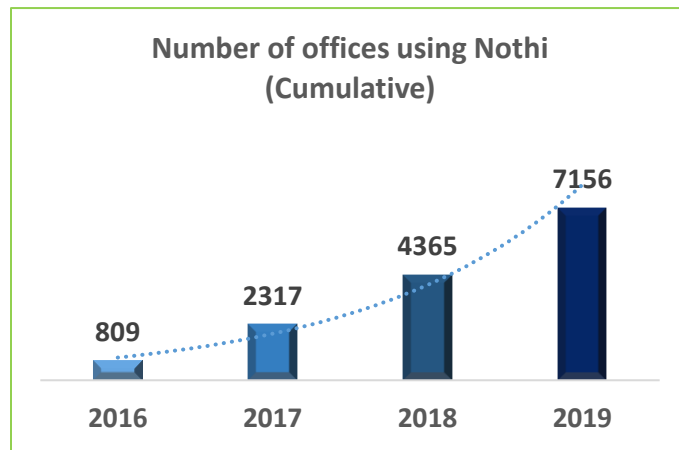


Figure 7: Number of offices using Nothi

Figure 6 & 7 depicts that the beneficiaries & offices using Nothi has significantly increased throughout the years.

As a part of e-Office implementation, e-filing has been expanded to 7156 government offices, 64 Deputy Commissioner's Offices and Divisional Commissioner's Offices. More than 85 thousand govt. officials have used e-File and more than 80 million files have been disposed-off through the nothi system.

### Case Study 3: 'e-Nothi': How a Freedom Fighter's application was quickly processed

"The dream of a perfect Bangladesh which I saw during the war is becoming a reality. I could have never imagined availing government services from the comfort of my own home!" an elated Freedom Fighter Abdul Khaleque explains.

Abdul Khaleque, an inhabitant of Hajiganj upaliza in Chandpur district, needed to have his gazette corrected and reissued. However, he was unaware of the steps he had to take in order to get his work done. He was incited regarding the lengthy and time-consuming nature of the process and the hassle associated with this. But upon visiting the local district office, the worries of Abdul Khaleque were quickly resolved as he learned about the new digital system involved printing the application form from the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs' website, filling up the form and submitting the form with the appropriate documents to the ministry. On July 15, 2019, Abdul Khaleque filled out and submitted the application accordingly and when asked for a follow-up, he was informed that after the documents are checked and verified, the application will be uploaded to the 'e-Nothi' system. The procedure in the 'e-Nothi' system will be completed within a couple of days and he will be informed via email and

SMS. The gazette will be available on the ministry’s website from where he will be able to download and print it. On 30 July 2019, Freedom Fighter Abdul Khaleque received an SMS which said that his application has been processed and that he can print a copy of his amended gazette from the ministry’s website.

*The (a2i) programme of the ICT Division supported by the Cabinet Division and UNDP launched ‘e-Nothi’, an online filing system, as an effective method of ensuring faster disbursement of files through the different layers of government offices with increased transparency and accountability. Till now, more than 8 million files have been disposed through e-filing in more than 8000 offices.*

#### 4.1.6. Digital Land Services:

Through several initiatives of a2i citizens including the underserved has been able to avail prompt, reliable, high-quality land services to all the through a novel, bottom-up and yet integrated approach across all land-related government institutions.

a2i introduced e-Mutation service to provide citizen responsive, hassle-free land service with the use of ICT in improving the operation of land administration. 35 million+ digitized Khatian have been stored in the digital record room and 10,111,701 Online Khatiyani (RS Khatiyani) have been published. Inheritance Calculator App has been Downloaded 50 Thousand+ times.

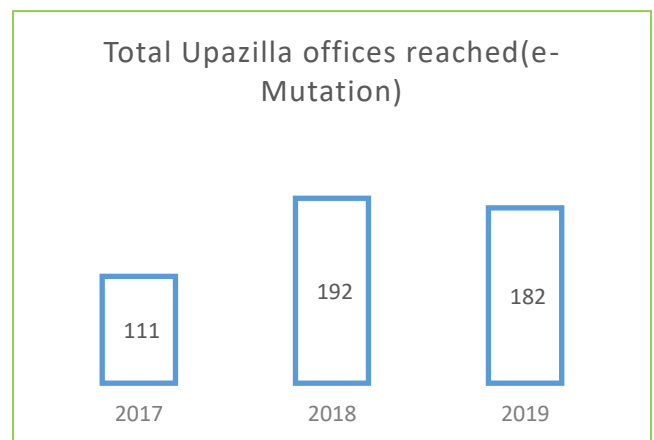
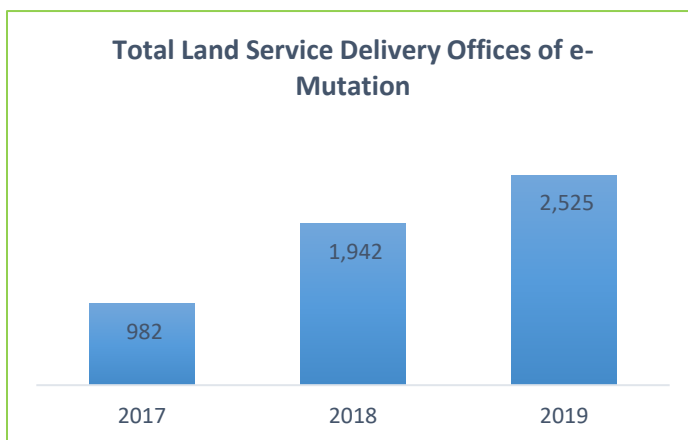


Figure 8: Total Land Service Delivery Offices & Total Land Service Delivery Offices of e-Mutation



Figure 8 depicts that Total Land Service Delivery Offices of e-Mutation has significantly increased throughout the years. So, it can be determined that the acceptability of E-mutation system has also increased in government land service delivery offices.

The e-mutation system has been introduced to 485 upazillas and connected more than 4467 offices

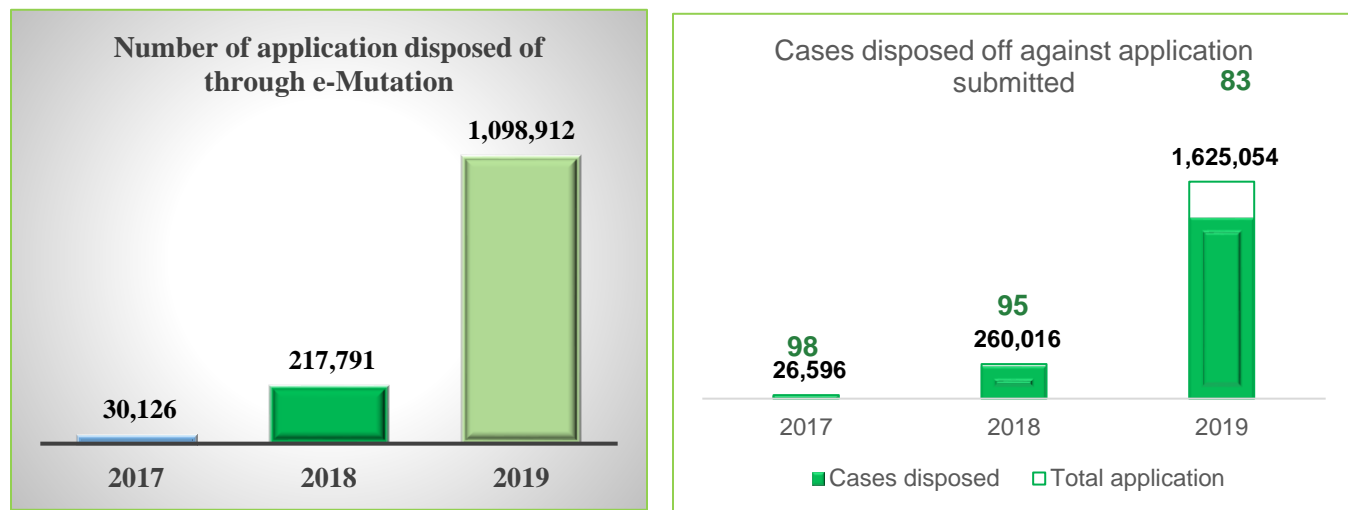


Figure 9: Number of applications and cases disposed of through e-Mutation System

Figure 9 depicts that in total, almost 1 million+ applications have been disposed of and 1.6 million cases through the system which is 83% of the total applications in 2019.

#### Case Study 4: One Stop Service in the Land Office to Solve Land Disposal

I did not have any money, I was wondering about the streets while praying to get a shelter, my piece of land. Today, I got justice which only became possible because of this new and improved system”, says a relieved and justified Sahila Khatun (45).

Faced with the betrayal from her brothers over the lands left by their parents, Sahila Khatun went over to Assistant Commissioner’s (Land) room at Brahmanpara, Comilla seeking for justice. Upon learning about her misery, the Assistant Commissioner (Land) Mohammad Zafor Sadik Chowdhury started an investigation in full swing. The investigation revealed that after their parent’s and her husband’s untimely death, Sahila was forcefully thrown out of her house by her brothers and their wives in an unfair manner to take possession of the land which was rightfully owned by Sahila.

After that, an inquiry was held within seven days with notice to her brothers to come, a hearing took place and their disposal were rejected and finally the poor woman’s land was returned to her. It took only seven days for Sahila to receive the Khatian through e-mutation.

*a2i introduced e-Mutation service to provide citizen responsive, hassle-free land service with the use of ICT in improving the operation of land administration. Information on Land records and surveys of 53 Districts with 1 crore+ Khatian have been stored in the system. 4M+ applications have been*

disposed among 126 thousand applications. . About 1.5 million citizens have been benefited from obtaining services through e-Mutation. The e-mutation has been introduced to 485 upazillas and connected more than 4,560 offices. More than 800 thousand cases have been disposed-off through the e-mutation system.

#### 4.1.7. Digital Service Design Lab



To make the services available very quickly to the citizens' doorsteps at low cost to ensure hassle-free service delivery, DSDL is a rapid mechanism arranged in collaboration with different ministries or divisions of the government of Bangladesh. As a preparatory step of

DSDL, the service of the concerned ministries are pre-analyzed and groups are created based on the analyzed service grouping. Every group consists of one team leader from Deputy Secretary/Joint Secretary/Director level who leads the team, two domain expert who has the knowledge of that relevant services, one ICT related officer, two service recipients and one Digital Service analyst or a resource person from a2i (Access to Information). Through this workshop, the Beneficiary & Service Provider's View, Existing Service Process Analysis, Digital System's Module & Feature Identification, Functional Flow Diagram, Digital Service Module Design, Pilot Implementation Plan, Efficiency Analysis (Time, Cost, Visit), User Management Plan, Software Development Budget, Pilot Implementation Budget, Integration Management Plan, Design Specification etc are derived as tangible output. The design of an integrated service delivery platform comprising of all the relevant existing services of the concerned ministry is finalized in this workshop.

The uniqueness of this methodology is that both service recipients and service providers are involved in this process which not only caters to the requirements of both parties but ensures ownership of the concerned ministry as the officials are directly involved in the process. The ministry officials, despite not having any technical knowledge can easily analyze their existing services and design the future digital system easily with extensive guidance and support from digital service experts of Digital Service Accelerator unit of a2i in predefined format and through prerequisite checklist. Till now, 22 ministries/ directorates have completed transforming all



public friendly services to digital services. A total 685 digital services have been already been designed. Besides, the design of transforming 62 services of 61 offices / agencies into digital services has been completed and 16 digital services are currently in operation. 22 integrated digital service platforms have been planned and designed. The Digital Services Accelerator team is also assisting in designing digital services for selected services in Fiji and the Philippines under the South-South initiative.

Digital Service Accelerator team of a2i has completed the digital service design lab of 34 organizations of 5 ministries and arranged 154 Roadmap Workshop till March 2019. All the ministries/ divisions and offices under them have their identified their services for digitization in the Roadmap Workshop with the assistance of that team. 2,874 services have been identified.

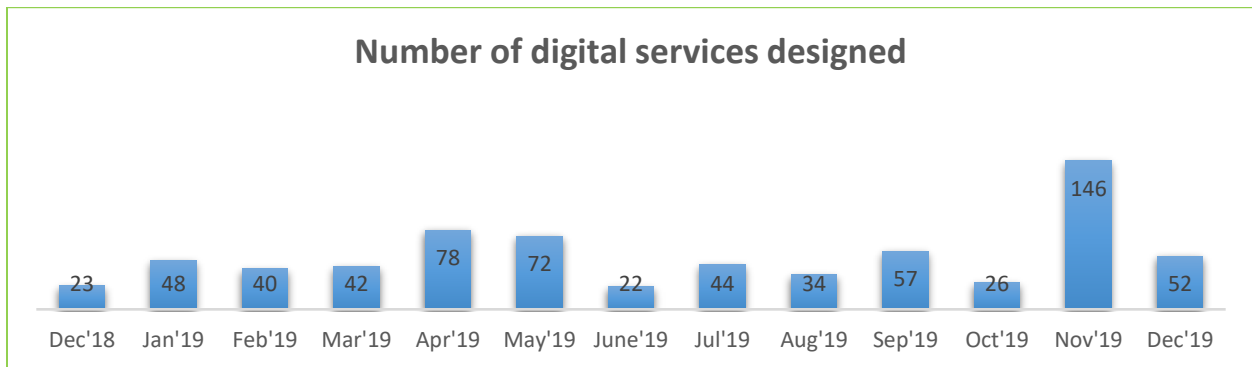


Figure 10: Number of digital services designed

#### 4.1.8. Service Process Simplification

To provide hassle free, quick and low-cost service at citizens' doorstep, it is necessary to simplify the existing service system. Therefore, initiatives have been taken jointly by the Access to Information (a2i) program and the Cabinet Division to use information technology for reducing unnecessary cost and steps. A total of 424 services have been simplified. A 'Service Profile Book' containing detailed information of 36 organizations has been published and 20 organizations have published their service facilitation activities in the form of a book.



communication among farmers, agricultural extension workers, researchers and agriculture officers. The Agriculture Portal and Agriculture Phone Service which is Krishok Bondhu Phone Sheba (3331) has been inaugurated at the very beginning of the year of 2018. Almost 8 million farmers have received services and have been empowered with the knowledge of increasing production, quality food, market-oriented agriculture, decent pricing, etc. this initiative has bridged central and rural areas. A total of 130427 calls have been received in 3331.

#### 4.1.9. Agriculture Portal & Krishok Bondhu Phone Seba (3331)

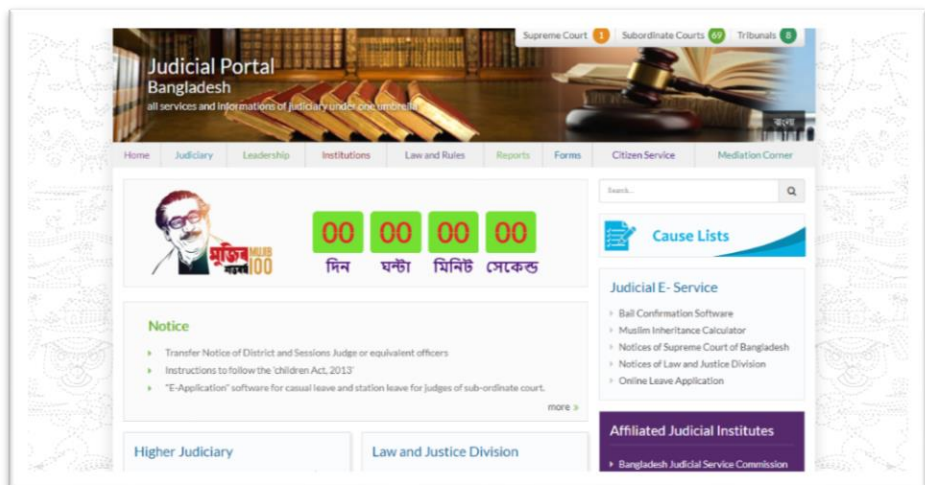
A single platform called “Krishi Batayon” (Agricultural Portal) has been developed for the farmers with the collaborative effort of a2i Programme and the Department of Agricultural Extension. The purpose of Krishi Batayon is to ensure delivery of service to the doorstep of the farmer, create a market-oriented agriculture, improve accountability in public service and produce safe food production through internal

##### Agriculture portal at a glance:

- ❖ Number of Crops-178
- ❖ Number of Varieties-1026
- ❖ Number of pests-1000
- ❖ Number of farmer’s data entry-7980229
- ❖ Number of exhibition-3958
- ❖ Number of Questions & answers-845
- ❖ Number of organizations/ shomities-5749
- ❖ Number of huts-6421
- ❖ Number of videos-624

#### 4.1.10. Judicial Portal

The judicial portal has created a huge impact on the justice system in its attempt to connect it with citizens from remote pockets of Bangladesh. Originally designed to enhance judicial efficiency and transparency, deliver better services in terms of the citizen’s choice, options and rights and overcome the huge backlogs, the judicial portal provides easy and



ready access for the disadvantaged, women and the disabled. The portal provides the citizens with options to choose their lawyer or find out their designated notary public.

This portal is a repository of all the judiciary information. Consequently, the portals of the Supreme Court, district courts and other judicial institutions and organizations will be connected to the portal, saving time and money paving the way to make firm inroads into a better and enviable justice system in Bangladesh. Judicial Portal has been implemented in 64 session courts and 5 district courts to render services of Judiciary to the public in a quick and easy way. Number of district courts implemented. Online cause List has been activated in 2000+ courts. The number of Active Cause List is 678.

#### 4.1.11. Government services in one platform: ekSheba

ekSheba platform has been developed with the aim of bringing government services to the doorsteps of all citizens by integrating all government services into an integrated portal through proper leveraging of modern

technology. Through this platform service recipients will be able to submit online service applications, track the latest status of the application and receive the service online at the comfort of their home.



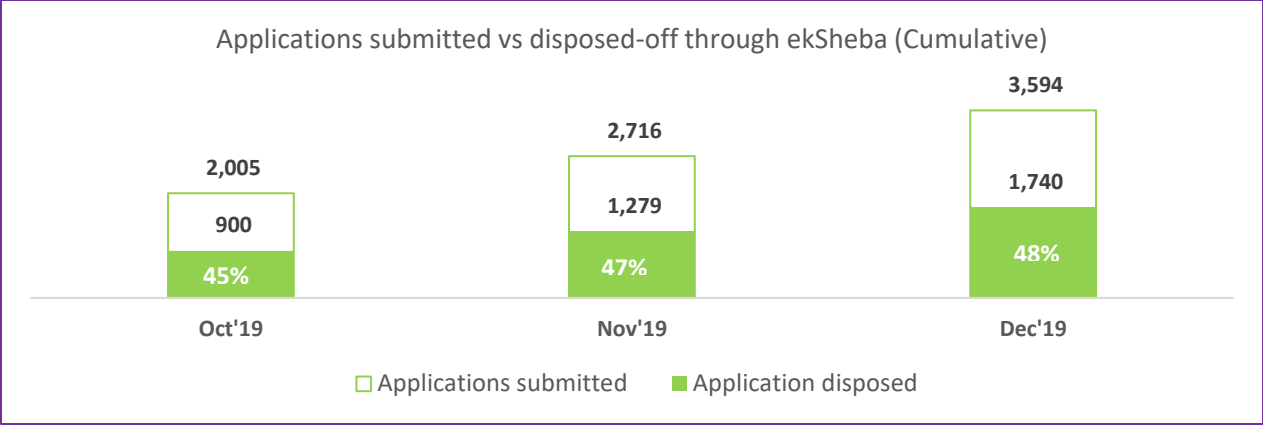


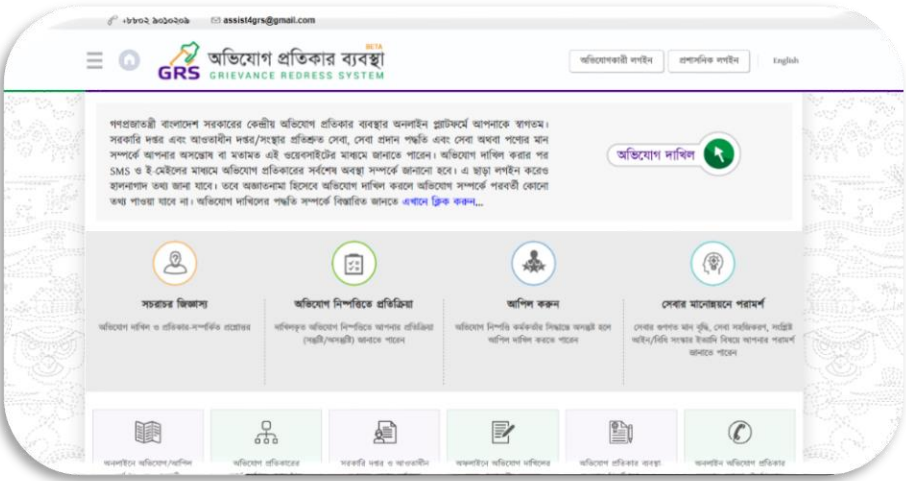
Figure 11: Applications submitted vs disposed-off through ekSheba (Cumulative)

Figure 11 depicts that the ratio of applications disposed against applications submitted has been on the rise.

172 services have been developed for the platform, 7156 Offices and 18047 Users have been connected. 4 systems have been integrated. 1740 applications have been disposed-off among 3594 submitted applications.

**4.1.12. Grievance Redress System:**

To ensure that the grievances of the service recipients regarding the promised services, products and / or service practices of the government organizations are properly submitted to the appropriate authorities without any harassment, an



online grievance redress system (GRS) has been developed by a2i at the request of the Cabinet Division. It is used as a platform for service recipients to seek redress or solution of government services. As a result of this platform, government agencies are able to alleviate the dissatisfaction of the service recipients. As a result, the quality of government services is enhanced, services are being provided in a short time, at low cost and without additional hassle of service recipients. A spirit of self-motivation is developed among government officials and employees. Collecting analytical information about the filing of the complaint and preventing the recurrence of the complaint has been made possible due to this platform. At present, 7,156 government offices are

connected to the system and 1006 out of 2528 submitted complaints have been disposed. The system currently has 5026 users and 2 systems have been integrated in this platform.

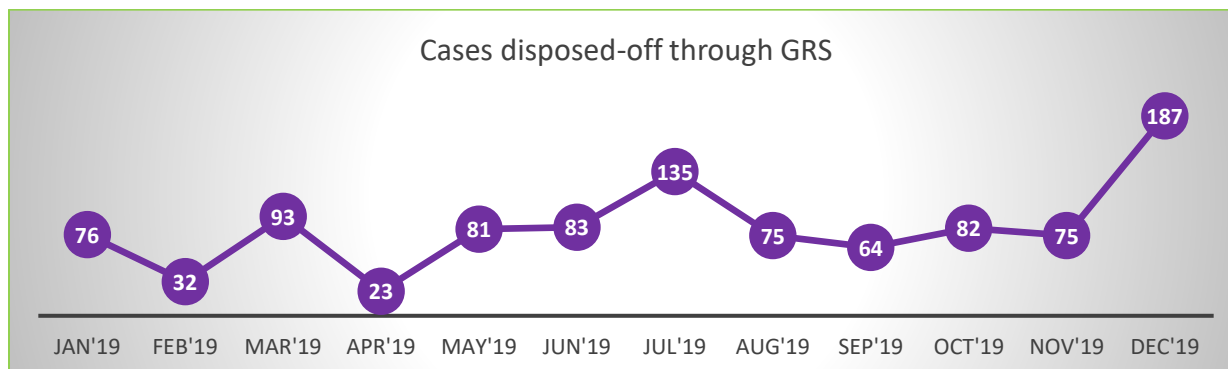


Figure 12: Cases disposed-off through GRS

#### 4.1.13. SDG Tracker: The development mirror of Bangladesh

With a vision of achieving SDG 2030, Ministry of Health has been working towards aligning SDGs with their activities. But on a wider picture, this became quite a difficult task when it came to proper alignment, data archiving and progress tracking. To expedite this process, Ministry of Health commenced SDG tracker with the purpose of inducing correlation among multiple indicators, target setting and progress tracking, disaggregation of all available data, SDG localization.

In order to help the government agencies in providing, approving and publishing data for each SDG indicator by drawing up analytics to get visual comparison a2i developed and implemented SDG Tracker. It is an effective tool to powerful and innovative tool having wider scope of inducing correlation among multiple indicators, target setting and progress tracking, disaggregation of all available data, SDG localization, etc.



Tracker ensures reflection of understanding data and its variability across all agencies centrally transforming from silo to whole-of-government. Besides the portal is empowering policy makers, gov., private agencies, academia, researchers, etc. to track year on year progress against each target and create required visualization.

Currently, 88 data providing agencies of Bangladesh are providing data to SDG tracker. Already 51% indicators have been updated eradicating the barriers faced. The analytics developed from the statistics of the Tracker is helping policy analysts to take development decisions since five thematic area-wise Analytics have already been developed. It has enabled the citizen of Bangladesh to head back from a centralized state to the local provider (union/upazila/district level) on a real time mode. Furthermore, SDG Tracker is the vital data repository for SDGs implementation in Bangladesh as it stores country's all data.

SDG Tracker comprises of data entry on 140 indicators out of which data of 116 indicators have been published. A total of 421 government officials have been trained on trackers. Data has already been updated on 40 agency trackers.

#### **4.2. Expected Output 2: Enabling legal and policy framework designed and partnerships established to facilitate responsive and transparent service delivery**

a2i fosters the creation of pro-poor digital financial products and services by linking financial service providers with financial inclusion experts and introducing them to tools, techniques and design principles necessary to understand, create, evolve, and test possible solutions. It builds Inclusive Digital Financial Eco-system through citizen-centred approach and fostering innovation.

##### **4.2.1. Agent Banking:**

To ensure banking services for the unbanked citizens including the marginal people or rural areas, Agent Banking service has been incorporated with Digital Centers. Through agent banking services, citizens are able to avail services of open bank accounts, collect various types of deposits, pay rural electricity



bills, pay various fees, collect remittance and many other banking financial services.



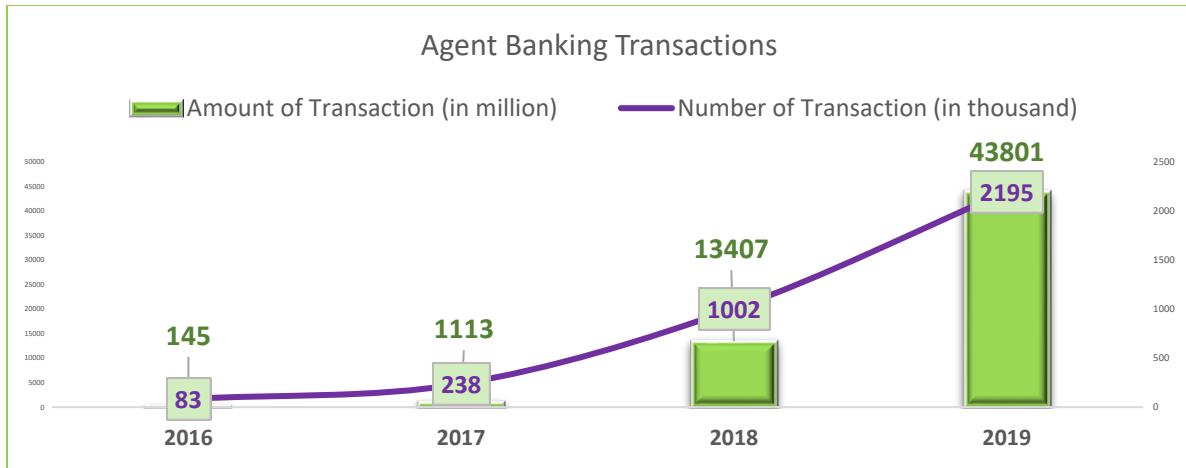


Figure 13: Agent Banking Transactions

Figure 13 shows a grand increase in the number of transactions occurred through Agent Banking portraying the popularity and acceptability of this initiative.

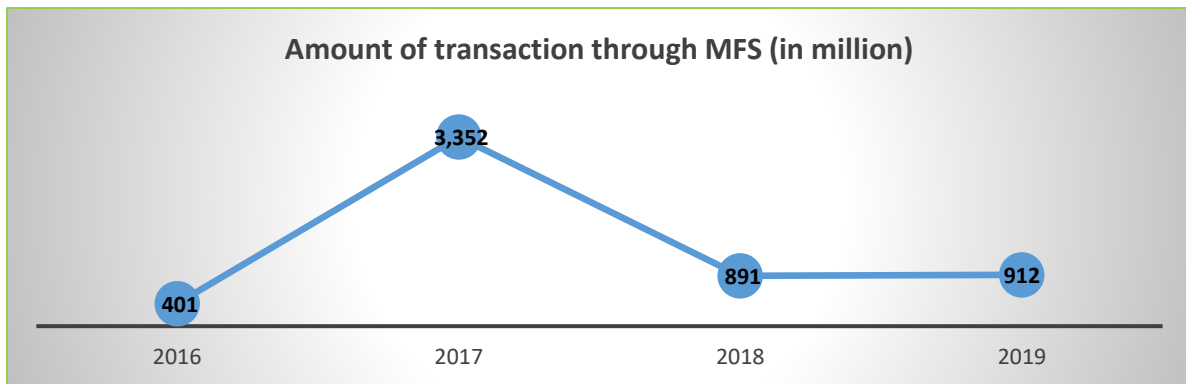


Figure 14: Amount of transaction through MFS (in million)

Currently, about 3.5 million transactions have been made through 3,900 Digital Centers amounting to BDT 58,465,402,464.

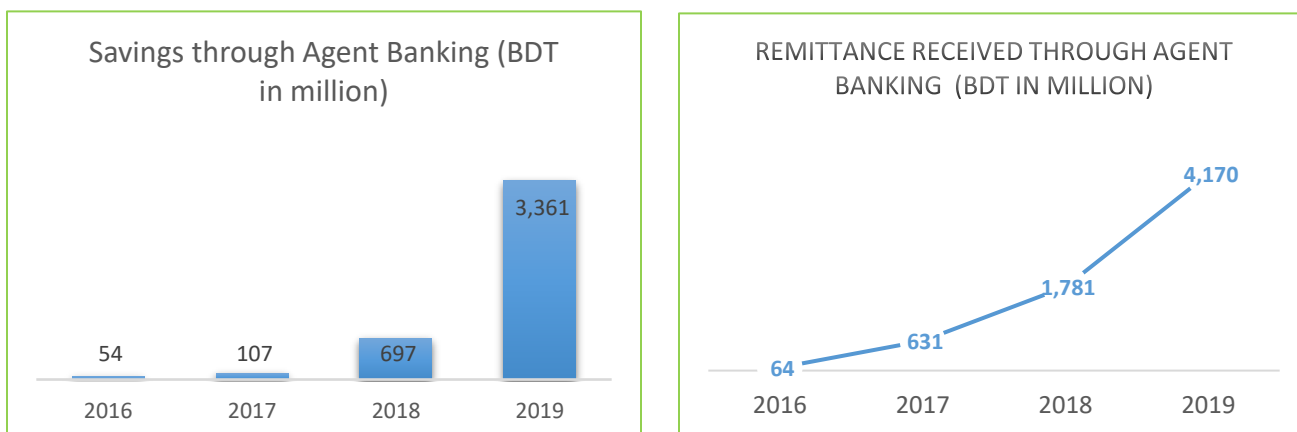


Figure 15: Savings & Remittance through Agent Banking (BDT in million)

About BDT 660 million remittances have been received through the Agent Banking Service. Through incorporation of the agent banking services, BDT 4,218,849,678 savings has been completed.

#### Case Study 5: Digital finance: Bringing banking to the doorsteps of the poor

“Starting my poultry business from scratch would never have been possible if not for the DFS lab and agent banking service. I got a loan through the DFS access points in my village and it has been my main instrument to develop my business” -Alamin (24).

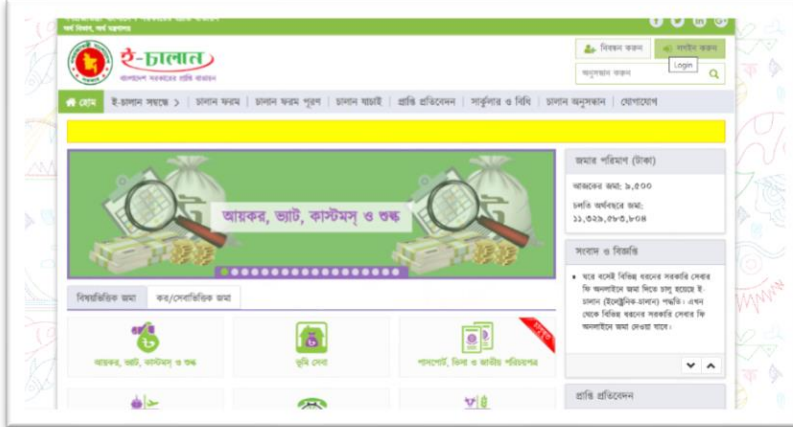
Upon graduating from university, Alamin from Debidwar, Cumilla preferred to be a self-made entrepreneur rather than entering in the fight of finding a decent job in the tough market. But opening his poultry business turned out to be a big challenge due to lack of financial support. And just like many other unbanked rural inhabitants of Bangladesh, neither Alamin nor his family members had any idea about getting a loan from a bank.

With the purpose of bringing many other Alamins under the umbrella of a formal banking infrastructure, and ensure financial inclusion for the most underserved citizen, Bangladesh Bank and a2i in 2018 initiated Agent Banking through the Digital Financial Services (DFS) lab in Union Digital Centers, a platform for decentralized public and private services with internet connectivity in more than 4500 unions across the country to get more people under the banking umbrella without the associated costs of infrastructure and logistics.

*The Digital Financial Services (DFS) Lab, an initiative of the Access to Information (a2i) programme of the ICT Division supported by the Cabinet Division and UNDP, works with a number of stakeholders to build DFS access points for the rural and unbanked population. The lab enables the application of citizen-centric products like digital payments, financial literacy and advocates policy reform based on local needs. The 3900+ DFS access points set up by the lab has brought in BDT 417 million as remittances in one month. According to Bangladesh Bank figures, 6,993 agent banking points including the 3,670 under UDCs now serve millions of people in the country and the number keeps rising.*



#### 4.2.2. e-Challan:



Citizens have to use challan or invoice for any kind of payment of government services, which is a troublesome and lengthy job. It is also an important method for revenue collection for the government. Digitization of the important system of revenue collection of the government and electronic

payment of various government services is an important element in the implementation of the Digital Bangladesh Vision 2021. To achieve this goal, Access to Information (A2I) Program has developed an electronic challan management system (<http://echallan.gov.bd>) under the guidance and supervision of the Finance Division. From e-challan system a citizen / service recipient will be able to easily fill up the invoice form and pay the fee for the desired service from home and also track the latest status of the invoice online. Analytical Dashboards have also been developed for the ministries/ departments/ agencies involved in the challan management process. From the dashboard, these organizations are able to get instant information about the fees received from the public to avail government services. They are also able to generate reports based on this analysis if required.

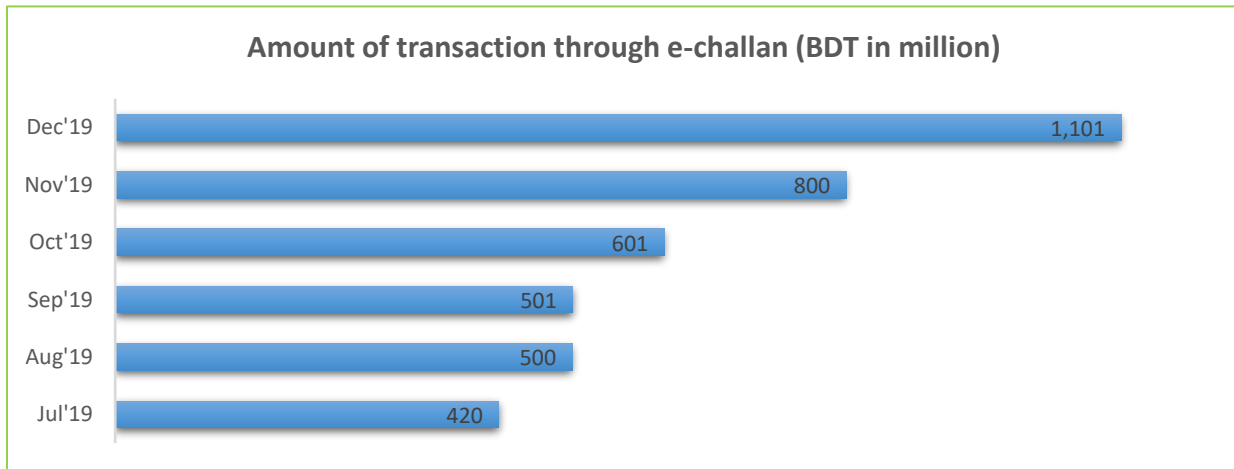


Figure 16: Amount of transaction through e-challan (BDT in million)

Figure 16 depicts that the Amount of transaction through e-challan has been on the rise.

To make challan collection easy and electronic, 18 govt. services including Passport Fee, Police Clearance Fee and National Identity Card Correction Fee have been integrated with e-Challan system. Total amount of Challan received through e-Challan is USD 1,100,992,087.

#### 4.2.3. Financial inclusion for the traditionally excluded citizen achieved through digital Social Safety Net (SSN) payment system:

In order to enable underserved and traditionally excluded citizens to receive inclusive financial services, a2i fosters the creation of pro-poor digital financial products and services by linking financial service providers with financial inclusion experts and introducing them to tools, techniques and design principles necessary to understand, create, evolve, and test possible solutions. It builds Inclusive Digital Financial Eco-system through citizen-centered approach and fostering innovation. The initiative of digitizing Government to Person (G2P) payment offers govt. efficiency in operations and it also improves the financial management. It is considered as a pre-requisite of financially inclusive eco-system. This digitized architecture benefits citizen with ease, convenience and faster last mile delivery.



1,463,049 beneficiaries have enrolled in the system along. 2,035 govt. staffs have been trained on payment digitization and 296,400 citizens have been sensitized about SSN. 1,976 Unions have been covered under the awareness campaign of digital payment. BDT 950,767,145 worth of payment has been disbursed digitally. 37,378 freedom fighters have received allowances digitally.

##### **Case Study 6: Digital finance: Bringing inclusive financial services at the doorsteps of the poor**

Sarbati, a 90+ widow living in Nagorpur, Tangail district, sweeps the local bazaar floor in exchange for half-rotten vegetables and rice which she cooks to feed herself. The only money she has to spend comes from the BDT 1,500 (USD 18.95) quarterly widow's allowance she receives from the government (G2P) as part of a social safety net programme. But it takes Sarbati hours of just travel time (not to mention the hours of waiting in long queues out in the open often in inclement weather) for her round trip to the bank branch that is 5.5 km away and costs her BDT 120 (USD 1.52). She also needs someone to accompany her as she is unable to travel such distances alone.

*The Digital Financial Services (DFS) Lab, an initiative of the Access to Information (a2i) programme of the ICT Division supported by the Cabinet Division and UNDP, works with a number of stakeholders to build DFS access points for the rural and unbanked population. The lab enables the application of citizen-centric products like digital payments, financial literacy and advocates policy reform based on local needs. The 3900+ DFS access points set up by the lab has brought in BDT 417 million as remittances in one month. According to Bangladesh Bank figures, 6,993 agent banking points including the 3,670 under UDCs now serve millions of people in the country and the number keeps rising.*

#### 4.2.4. ekPay:

To achieve the goal of the government that “By the year 2021, majority of citizen services will be provided either on their fingertips of mobile phones or through our union digital centers at the doorsteps of people, a2i has developed a online bill payment



##### ekPay at a glance:

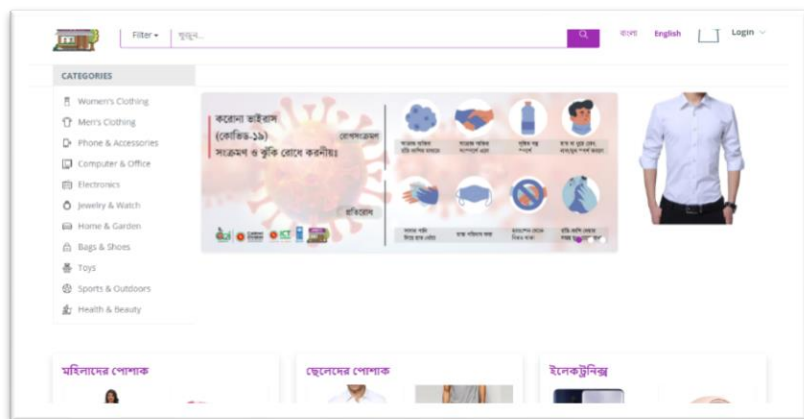
- 6 services integrated in the system
- 5 billers integrated in the system.
- Partnership made with 16 billers
- Partnership made with 24 Financial Service Providers.

system named “ekPay”. ekPay’ is a one-stop payment platform where the people will get facilities to pay utility bills, education related fees and other payments. The citizens will be able to pay water bills and holding taxes, get municipality or city corporation certificates, automated property management and e-trade license facilities under

the pilot programme.

#### 4.2.5. Entrepreneurship connecting citizen to business through Rural Assisted e-Commerce: ekShop

‘ekShop’ is a rural assisted e-Commerce platform has been launched to bring e-Commerce services at the doorsteps of the citizens as well as to create the scope of business for the entrepreneurs in the Digital Centres. Moreover, it also creates scope for making the platform citizen-friendly



along with benefitting grassroots consumer's socio-economically. ekShop is well known for its unique architecture which connects all the digital centres including UDC, CDC, PDC. ekShop has also connected all the ecommerce and logistics partners to ensure the last mile delivery and make

the process easier. The objective of ekshop is serving the beneficiaries with highest priority while ensuring reliability, product authenticity and variety and top-notch customer service.

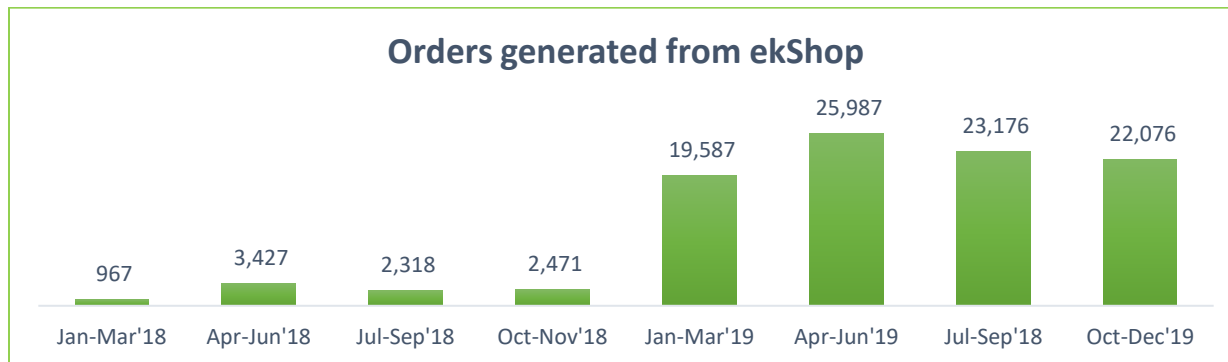


Figure 17: Orders generated from ekShop

From figure 17, it can be seen that the highest amount of order generated from ekShop was during Apr-Jun 19 which has occurred because of Eid.

ekShop has delivered more than 600k products according to the requirement of customers through 3958 digital centres. They provided cash on delivery services to the citizens from the marginalized areas also. 1 Million+ products have been taken to rural areas. 1389 rural producers are selling through the platform with Gross amount of Revenue being USD 1,258,824 623479 products have been delivered to 0.45 Million buyers.

#### Case Study 7: Digitally facilitating entrepreneurs under integrated E-Commerce Platform

“I had given up all hope of sending my mother clothes for Eid and it broke my heart. Until I got to know about Ek-Shop and because of it today my mother will be wearing the Saree I bought her. Our eid is now complete”, says a smiling Rahim.

Rahim, a young nonresidential Bangladeshi worker was living in Malaysia when during one Eid, he wanted to buy clothes for his mother living in Bangladesh. But he was worried about the delivery cost and timely delivery. Suddenly while browsing Facebook he noticed a post about “Ek Shop” where he could buy his desired products through online platform and send it overseas. Through ekShop Malaysia, Rahim ordered a new saree for his mother while sitting in Malaysia and had it delivered to the local UDC in his native village Manikpur, Bangladesh for his mother to receive it.

*A2i has launched an e-commerce platform called 'Ek-Shop' in which more than 10,000 entrepreneurs from across the country are facilitated through e-commerce based financial transactions through the 'Assisted e-commerce' model with the help of digital centers. ekShop has launched its services in Malaysia with 2 UDCs providing ekShop facilities to aid the resident Bangladeshis there. Through the UDCs, residents are ordering Bangladeshi products while in Malaysia and vice versa.*

**4.3. Expected Output 3: Institutional and incentive frameworks developed to promote innovative service delivery mechanisms.**

**4.3.1. a2i Innovation Fund (AIF)**

To make citizens life simpler and easier, a2i Innovation Fund fosters a culture of innovation and engages and empowers the whole society of Bangladesh to co-create novel solutions, to development challenges and boost their chances of making the impact at scale. Since its launch in March 2013, it has been providing seed funds (maximum BDT 25 lac) and incubating cost-effective, citizen-centric design innovations to improve public services, particularly for underserved communities.

AIF has attracted 10,590+ innovative proposals. 247 projects have been funded. 96 projects have been completed. USD 4.5 Million+ worth of fund has been received by the Innovators. 6 AIF funded projects have received WSIS award.

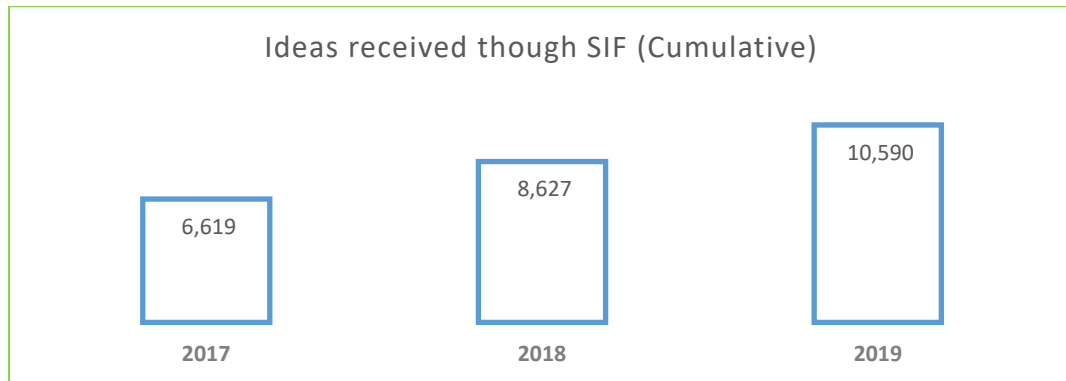


Figure 18: Ideas received though SIF (Cumulative)



### 4.3.2. i-Lab or Innovation Lab: Changing the Scenario of Bangladesh



Innovation Lab or iLab seeks, incubates and accelerates innovations to tackle large problems of society by leveraging technology, particularly electro-mechanical devices, Internet of Things and renewable energy. iLab reaches out to individual innovators, students and startups through innovation and challenge competitions. Promising innovators receive seed funding from an Innovation Fund, access to a

Maker Lab set up by iLab, and mentorship by experts from the industry and academia. The incubation process comes with guidance to the young innovators to turn a prototype into a practical and viable solution. Innovators are further supported through copyright and patent filing to protect intellectual property of the innovators.

Among 60 developed Prototypes, 27 are in Piloting and 14 have been commercialized.

#### ➤ **Innov-a-thon:**

Innov-A-Thon is a competition organized annually by Innovation Lab, where everyone participates by creating prototypes of various projects. In order to participate in this competition, the participant must develop a visible prototype that solves a national problem or transforms a traditional system into a digital version that is faster than before with low cost maintainers.

#### ➤ **Innovation HUB:**

Innovation Hub is a platform for students, colleges, universities, and equivalent educational institutions and research institutes combined with a group of researchers, which are designed to expand the technology research and innovative activities under the overall supervision of Innovation Lab. Initially 138 Universities have been formally launched Innovation Hub. Innovation hub structure is in progress in polytechnic institutes, colleges and equivalent educational institutes and research institutions

#### ➤ **Challenge Fund:**

Challenge Fund is a special type of competition that is organized on several occasions by Innovan Lab. The main goal of this competition is to solve the national public issues.

#### ➤ **Prototype and Product Development**

Prototype and product development activities are the major part of the regular program of Innovation Lab. Various types of prototype development, design, testing are carried out throughout the year. Some of the remarkable projects of i-Lab are: Reusing plastic for producing Fuel, Low-Cost Multimedia Classroom (MMC), e-Copyright, Low-Cost Ambulance, Krishibondhu, Centralized Nebulizer System, Portable infant incubator, Fuel from Plastic, Accessible Dictionary, Smart White Cane, Solar Tri-Cycle and so on.



#### Case Study 8: Ensuring inclusive education for the visually impaired through innovation

Having lived with visual impairment since birth, Saifuddin Rafi always depended on others to read for him. The books he wanted to read were narrated by his family members. Being born in a small village in Chittagong, his family struggled to provide him with specialized education.

Despite the challenges he faced due to his impairment, Rafi obtained the highest grade of GPA 5 in his Higher Secondary Exams (HSC). He was among the 3.54% of the students in the HSC exams across the country who obtained GPA 5 that. When he was asked about the secret behind his success, gleaming with joy he replied, “This was made possible by the multimedia talking book!” He said that the biggest advantage of the multimedia talking book was that he didn’t need help from anyone else to use it. “Previously I needed a lot of help from my sister for studying but this book has helped me be more independent. It may seem like a small step but it is a very big achievement for me, as I have become more self-reliant and confident through this process.”

*The Access to Information (a2i) programme of the ICT Division supported by the Cabinet Division and UNDP introduced Daisy, a standard multimedia talking book which is specially designed for visually impaired students. Visually impaired students can learn their lessons independently through this book.*

*Rafi’s success stories not only inspire millions of other people with disabilities, but it also inspires the government, UNDP, USAID and a2i to continue working towards making the world a better and more inclusive place for all.*

#### Case Study 9: Recycling plastic to save the environment

Plastic pollution is a worldwide problem and its hazards are greater than other wastes. One HM Tawhid came up with an answer to this problem by recycling plastic in an eco-friendly manner facilitated by a2i’s Innovation Lab (iLab). The Innovation Lab (iLab) is an initiative of the Access to Information (a2i) programme supported by the Cabinet Division, the ICT Division,

UNDP and USAID and it offers the prospect of solutions and opportunities for sustainable development that are better, cheaper, faster, scalable and easy to use through focusing on science, technology and innovation related idea implementation. The innovation lab (iLab) has leveraged for the brightest minds of the country to come together and innovate for a better future. It has led 64 projects in its first three years focusing on a wide range of service and policy challenges.

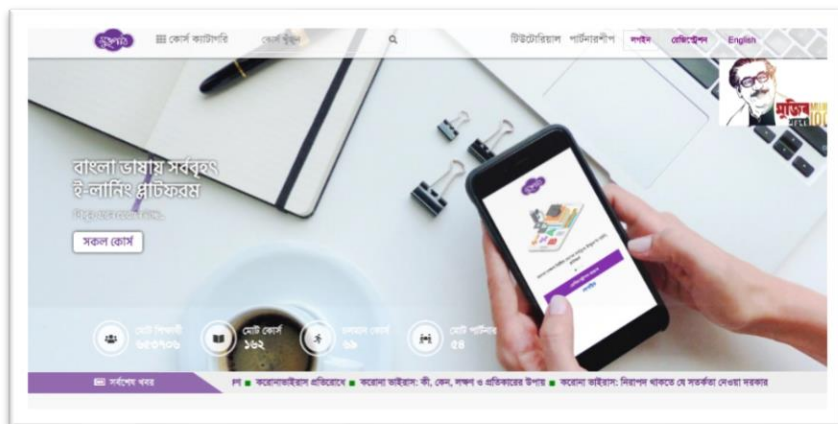
This innovative project attacked plastic from two directions — reduce waste and incentivize plastic waste collection. This plastic is then used to produce fuel. The process breaks up polythene and plastic and transforms it into another form of carbon producing fuel (petrol and diesel).

This is a proven concept currently implemented in Jamalpur, a northern district of Bangladesh. The project has a capacity to process 200kg to 400kg of plastic every day with an average productivity of over 55%. A single unit (300kg/day) can reduce almost 80% of the entire district’s plastic hazard. This small project from a small town in Bangladesh could actually provide the solution if it were scaled up. Tawhid’s innovation could potentially reduce 80% of plastic waste and 30% of Bangladesh’s entire waste.

#### 4.4. Expected Output 4: Linkages established with public and private sectors and awareness created among the citizens

##### 4.4.1. Quality Education: Innovation and achievements in Education Initiative: MuktoPaath (e-Learning platform):

MuktoPaath ([www.muktopaath.gov.bd](http://www.muktopaath.gov.bd)) is a unique e-Learning platform for improving professional competencies and skills development over multiple sectors. Trainees can sit for theoretical lessons from wherever they want: access both offline and online content, easily store and retrieve contents from memory card, go through lessons according to their comfort, receive feedback from the trainer from a distant place.



The target groups of MuktoPaath are the teachers, students, youths, employees, migrant workers, homemakers and more. To meet the demand of these groups, different courses are



under development in general, technical and vocational category. Anyone can take online courses and gain knowledge and skills from anywhere using this platform.

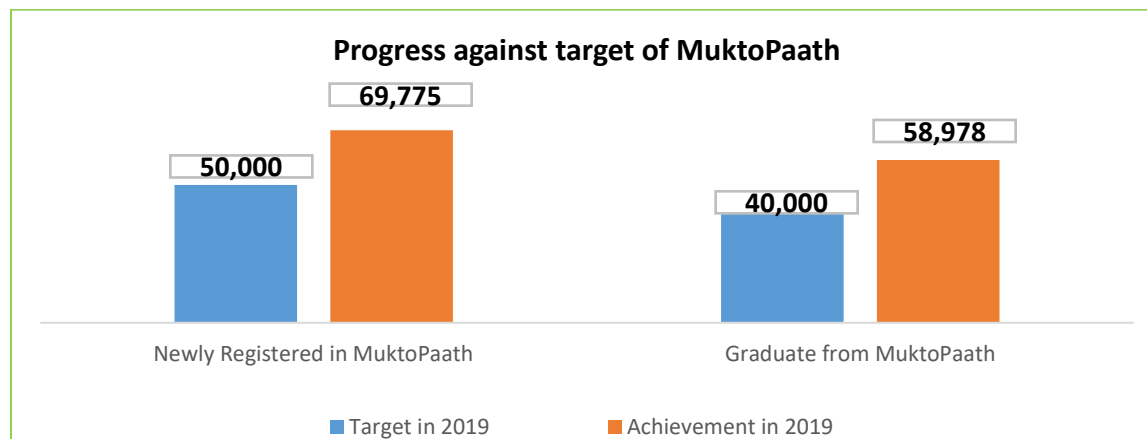


Figure 19: Progress against target of MuktoPaath

It is remarkable that the MuktoPaath has 223323 registered members and total graduate from MuktoPaath is 1,65,000+. Total enrolment in different courses is 243,188. 165 courses have been uploaded in MuktoPaath. 10,023 Govt. Officers have enrolled in the platform. MuktaPaath has been awarded WSIS Award by ITU and “Sohel Samad Award” by Bangladesh Press Institute.

#### Case Study 10: Recycling plastic to save the environment

*“The courses of Muktopaath seemed very easy and understandable to me and people could learn various useful knowledge from there.”- Nasir Uddin.*

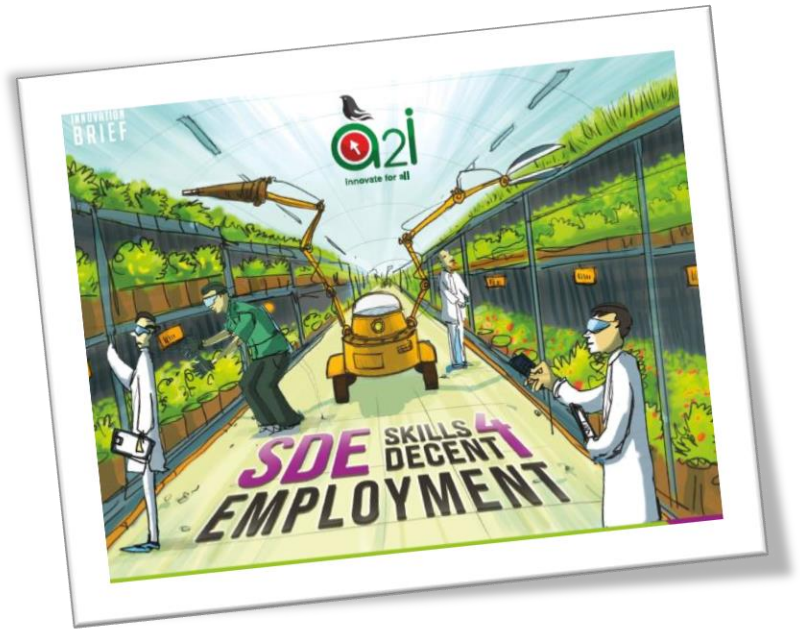
Nasir Uddin, is a school teacher in Barishal district, loves to share new ideas and knowledge with his students and other community members. He often noticed that during many local youth and adult people spend their leisure time by doing nothing. He decided to help them to utilize that free time. He started to invite them to a small gathering in an empty place of a bazaar. He discussed about Muktopaath with the local youth and adults and introduced them with “Beef Fattening” & “Quail Farming in Low Budget” courses in the projector. People started to learn many new and useful things from the courses and became very fascinated. Slowly, people started to use those techniques and in the last Eid-UL-Azha, many of them had a great success with the help of the course. They all thanked him and also expressed their willingness to learn more from Muktpaath.

*Initiated by a2i, MuktoPaath (www.muktopaath.gov.bd) is a unique e-Learning platform for improving professional competencies and skills development over multiple sectors. Anyone can take online courses and gain knowledge and skills from anywhere using this platform. It is remarkable that the total MuktoPaath currently has 215799 registered members and total graduate from MuktoPaath is 1,65,000+. Currently there are more than 136 Courses in the platform.*

#### 4.4.2. Skills for Decent Employment

a2i has developed skills of 253,000 youths (15+ years) including male, female, ethnic people and people with disabilities and created employment of more than 2,26,032 youths. Introducing innovation in skills development initiatives, countrywide monitoring of skills development initiatives, skilled HR in formal and informal sector, decent employment and standard livelihood were the key factors towards the way of this achievement.

Here, implementation, monitoring and mentoring were done through field administration. Skills portal and Imam Portal were developed and used for central coordination.



Besides, government ministries and departments, i.e. Department of Social Services, Department of Youth Development, Islamic Foundation, etc. were sensitized for this.

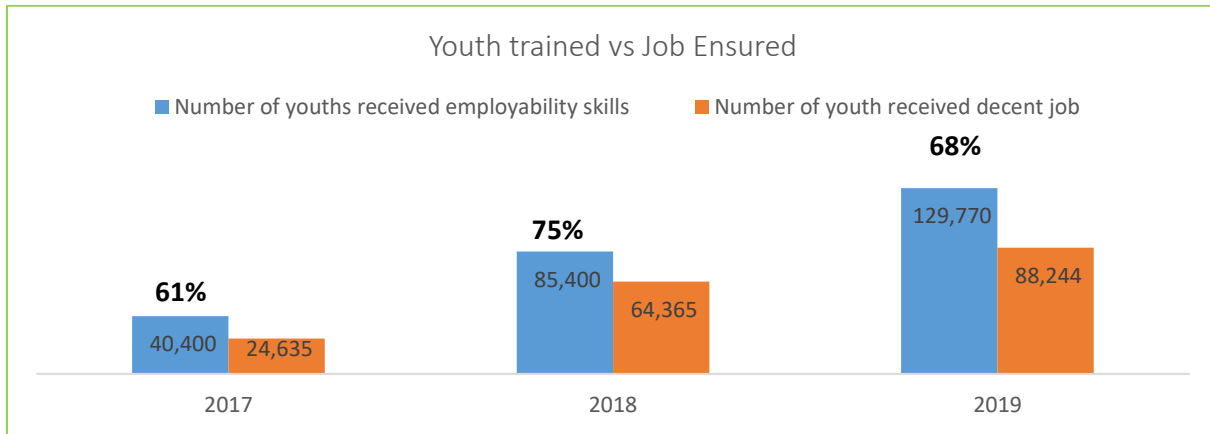


Figure 20: Youth trained vs Job Ensured

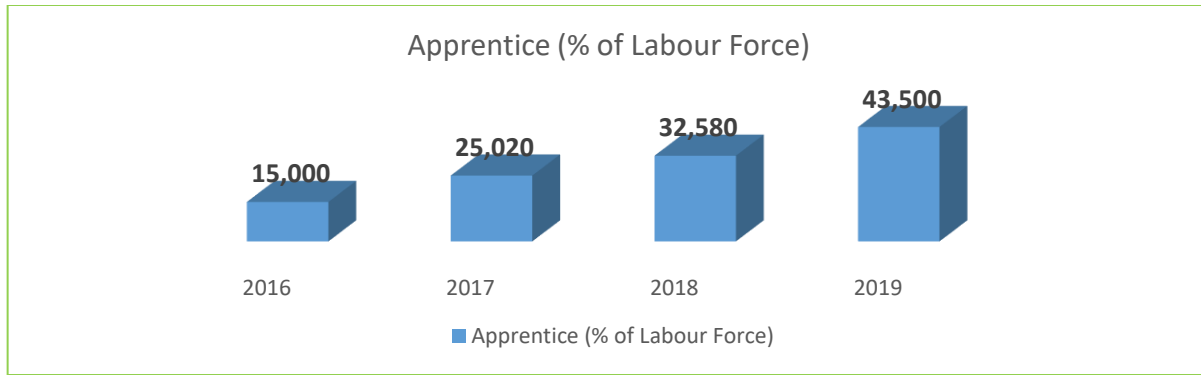
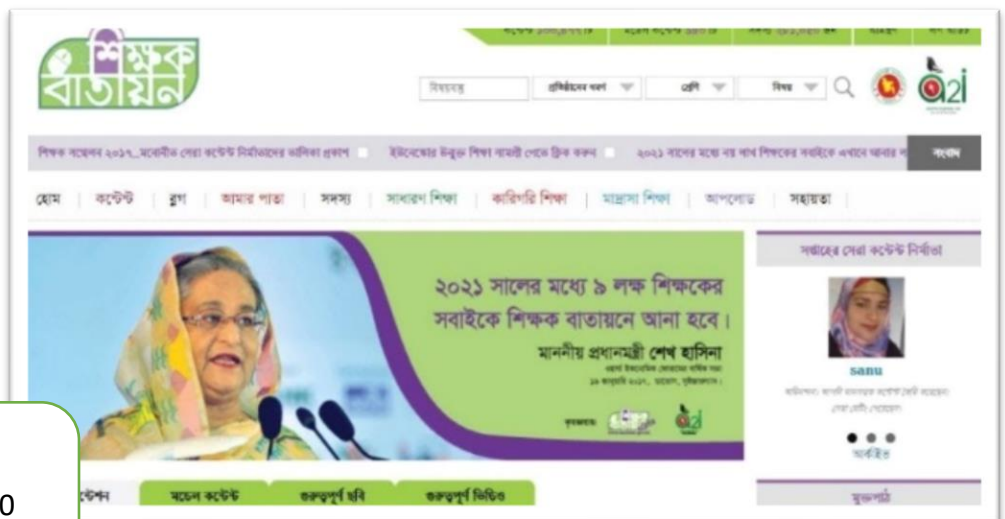


Figure 21: Youths received employability skills by Apprenticeship Programme

a2i has initiated skill-based training and apprenticeship programmes in the following sectors: Light Engineering, Tourism and Hospitality, Agro-Food, Construction including the representatives of Small ethnic groups of the plain lands, Industries of economic zone, migrant workers, students of Kawmi Madrasha, Women of grassroots areas.

#### 4.4.3. Teachers' Portal

Teachers Portal is an online platform for the teachers of general, madrasa & vocational education system that laps together under one umbrella established in 2014. This portal is a potential platform that empowers the teachers



#### Teacher's Portal:

- ✓ Registered Teacher: 3,98,000
- ✓ Uploaded Content: 2,49,131
- ✓ Model Content: 953

and promotes e-learning through the use of ICT applications. It provides access to multimedia-based content, peer-mentoring and self-paced learning.

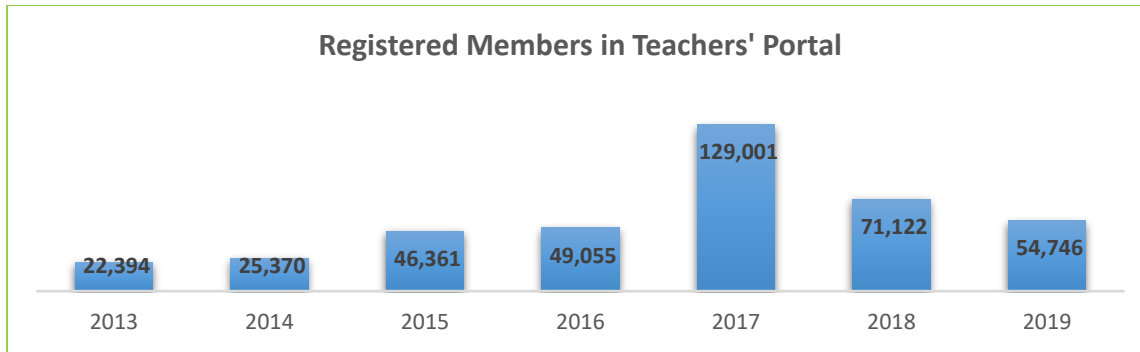


Figure 22: Registered Members in Teachers' Portal

#### Case Study 11: Teachers' Portal: A powerful tool for reforming teacher development

Kazi Monira is an assistant teacher at Muktagacha High school in Mymensingh. As technology and the use of computers progressed in education, she found herself struggling to keep up due to her inability to operate computers. Hence, she wanted to take classes to learn and adapt to computer technology to help her in her profession.

Right at that time, she came to know about a new platform called 'Teachers Portal' which was initiated to bring together the country's teachers and allow access to quality content, peer-mentoring, self-paced learning through practice, peer-collaboration, and motivation through healthy competition. Through this technology enabled solution, Monira quickly adapted herself to new web based content. Today, she is one of the most liked teachers on the platform. Today, she regularly provides valuable insights to other teachers seeking to improve their skills.

"Teachers' Portal has changed my life and has also increased my self-confidence and that made a huge impact on my life." says a grateful Monira.

*The Access to Information (a2i) programme of the ICT Division supported by the Cabinet Division and UNDP designed and developed the Teachers' Portal in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the British Council to not only complement multimedia classrooms but also provide a platform for teachers to engage with each other directly and learn through peer collaboration and guidance. More than 3,90,000 teachers are able to access almost 2,00,000 contents.*

#### 4.4.4. Konnect (Youth Portal) Launched to Promote STEM Education and Skills

'Konnect' is a digital platform for teenagers where they can share, upload and learn from creative multimedia content (e.g., books, movies, comic books) and essential life lessons that can help develop their talent, social & personal skills,

##### **Konnect:**

- ✓ Registered Student: 309,330
- ✓ Partner Organization: 100+
- ✓ Model Content: 27,787



personality, and commitment to the welfare of the nation. The journey of Konnect has been started on 1st of February 2018.

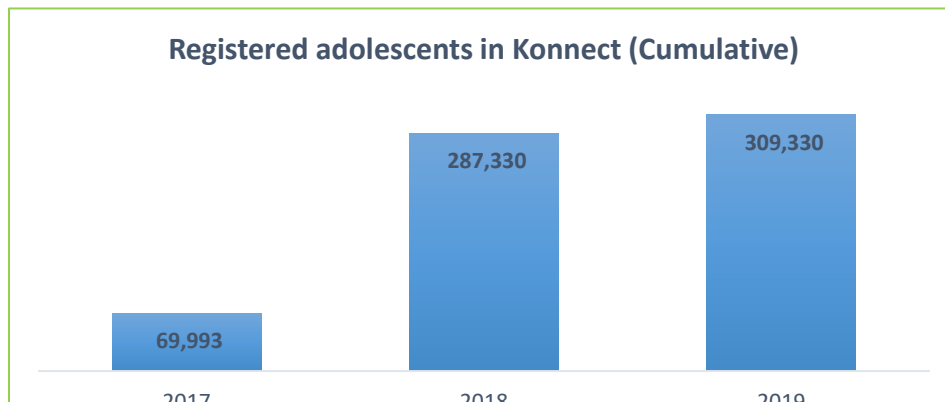


Figure 23: Registered adolescents in Konnect (Cumulative)

#### 4.4.5. Multimedia Classroom:

The Government of Bangladesh aiming to turn the huge number of its potential young intelligent populace into a resourceful one, has emphasized on ICT in education by introducing 'multimedia classrooms' primary schools. The Multimedia Classroom Monitoring System (Application & Dashboard) together ensures real-time monitoring & mentoring of connected Multimedia Classrooms across the country. 38500 Multi-media Classrooms have been established all over the

country. 96% of the multimedia classroom is Active. 4428907 classes have been taken through MMC. 11.10% of the schools are active which take at least two classes per week.



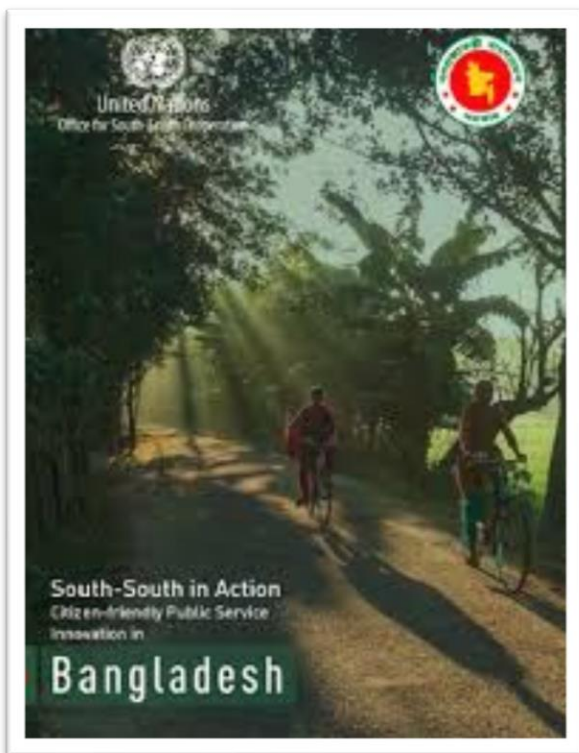
#### 4.4.6. Scaling up innovations in public service delivery:



#### South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The success of the a2i's initiatives is going beyond Bangladesh and its South Asian neighbors Maldives and Bhutan teamed up with a2i to adopt some of Bangladesh's most popular initiatives- multimedia classrooms, e-health, e-payments, information- technology training and government enterprise architecture, as well as the signature Digital Centers. Peru signed a contract with Bangladesh to implement its own SDG tracker after the successful launch of Bangladesh's SDG Tracker, a platform that tracks the country's SDG progress against pre-set targets, by region, by indicator and across time, by integrating data from various agencies using any device in any





location. Paraguay, Tunisia, Brazil, Namibia, Malawi, Nigeria, Colombia, Morocco, Uganda and Ecuador have expressed interest in doing the same.

Inspired by the success of the National Portal created by a2i, Somalia took the initiative to build one of their own. Cambodia decided to emulate Bangladesh's empathy training, a crucial ingredient in Bangladesh's success in implementing many of their interventions and are now sending doctors to different medical colleges disguised as patients.

Much of this collaboration is being done through the South-South Network for Public Service Innovation (SSN4PSI) launched in 2017 by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation. Through the network, Bangladesh not only collaborates with fellow developing countries,

but has been taking a lead in forging these partnerships between Southern countries.

#### ➤ **International Workshop of SSN4PSI**

a2i formed partnerships with Peru, Singapore, Paraguay, Somalia, the Philippines on various collaboration activities through South-South Network. In line with this, an SSN4PSI workshop was organized by a2i in Astana, Kazakhstan in June 2018 for knowledge sharing of best practices in collaboration with Astana Civil Service Hub. This workshop induced effective matchmaking on public service innovation. 16 partnership opportunities have been created so far. Along with that the first e-Newsletter for SSN4PSI was launched. Moreover, "Good Practices on South-South" was published where 5 different innovations of a2i such as Digital Centre, Service Innovation Fund, Empathy Training, TCV: An Innovation Measurement Tool to Improve Public Service Delivery and SDG Tracker have been included in the publication.

#### ➤ **Replication of a2i initiatives in Somalia**

With the facilitation of a2i, the 'Innovate for Somalia' project of UNDP Somalia hosted a series of workshops with 10 ministries and Prime Minister's Office from 13-28 July 2018. In these workshops, public services offered by the Somalian government have been analyzed and opportunities for digital innovations have been explored. In the series of workshop, 19 Public services were identified as a quick win. Replication of a2i's National Portal was hosted by UNDP in Somalia in September 2018.



➤ **MoU between the 'National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI),' Peru and a2i**

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the “National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI)” of Peru and a2i, to establish a framework of cooperation in monitoring SDGs and different data initiatives. The event was jointly organized by a2i, INEI and Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) at the UN World Data Forum, Dubai, UAE on 23rd October 2018. Collaboration between Bangladesh’s a2i and Peru’s INEI is expected to make the nexus of SDG Tracker, South-South Cooperation and citizen-centric public service development stronger and more effective.



➤ **“Pacific Capacity Building Workshop” in the sidelines of the Pacific Consultation on South-South Cooperation on 8th March 2019 (Fiji)**



**Key Results:**

- Regional advocacy with partners like Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) and United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)
- Countries/Organizations joined: 18
- Facilitation of matchmaking on initiatives like Blue Economy, Climate Financing, and Food Security.

- **Side-event on “A Glimpse of the Future South-South and Triangular Cooperation – Asia-Pacific’s Contribution in Science, Technology and Innovation” on the sidelines of BAPA 40+ Conference on 20th March, 2019 (Buenos Aires, Argentina)**



**Key Results:**

- High-level policy advocacy with Governments of the Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam; UNESCO International Science, Technology & Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation (ISTIC); and, All-India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI).

- **Side-event on “Decent Jobs for Youth: Working together in Asia and the Pacific” on the sidelines of the 6th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development on 28th March, 2019 (Bangkok)**

**Key Results:**

- High-level policy advocacy with partners like FAO, ILO, UNDP, and UNFPA.

- **Workshop on “Empowering Youth for Equitable Growth in the Era of SDGs” on the sidelines of the 2019 Annual Conference on Decent Jobs for Youth on 28th May 2019 (Rome, Italy)**

**Key Results:**

- Countries/Organizations joined: 20
- Creation of Partnership opportunities: 50

➤ **Mission of UNDP-a2i in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines with facilitation from UNDP in the Philippines, 23 June to 7 July 2019**

Key Results:

- Identification of Initiatives for replication from UNDP-a2i, including Digital Centre, National Portal, Empathy Training, Skills Development, Educational Transformation, Digital Services, SDG Tracker etc.
- Pilot of Evaluation & Plan of Scaling Up of Bangsamoro-a2i (Ba2i) by December, 2019



- HLPF side-event on “Data Revolution for Ensuring Decent Work for All with a Focus on Youth” on 15th July, 2019



#### Key Results:

- High-level policy advocacy with partners like Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN, Permanent Mission of Denmark to the UN, UNDESA, UNESCAP, UNCDF, ILO, ActionAid, Restless Development UK, and Vital Strategies.

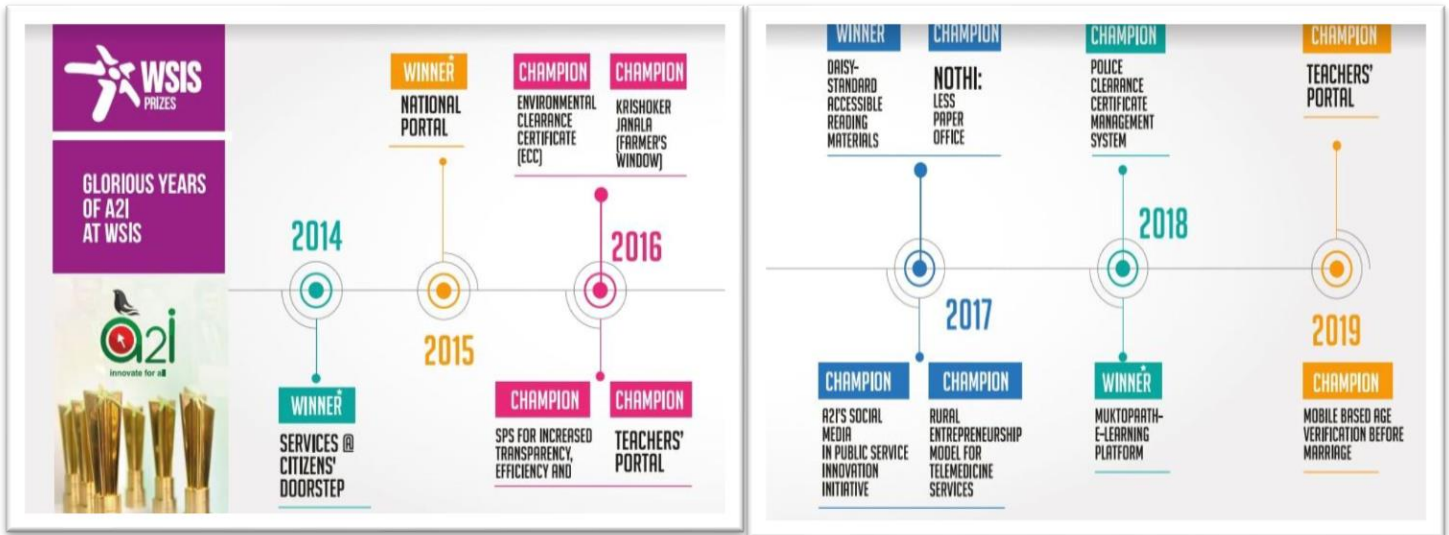
#### 5. Bangladesh’s Leapfrog in UN e-Government Development Ranking:

It is very important to be noted that Bangladesh has upgraded its position in the UN e-Government development ranking which is 115. It climbs from 150 to 115 in UN e-Government Ranking. Basically, Bangladesh has made significant progress in the online service index by creating various online services using ICT tool and presenting it through mobile or web app. Besides, Bangladesh has also made progress in the telecommunication index and the Human Capital Index.



#### 6. Awards and Recognitions:





Significant awards and recognitions of a2i are as follows:

| SL. | Name of Initiative  | Name of Prize & Recognition                                 | Year | Year wise Total Awards & Recognition |
|-----|---|---|------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Innovation Fund Awarded Projects                              | Information Society Innovation Fund (ISIF) Award            | 2013 | 02 Awards                            |
| 2.  |   | Zero Projects Awards on Inclusive Education                 | 2013 |                                      |
| 3.  | Digital Center  | WSIS Award  | 2014 | 01 Award                             |
| 4.  | National Portal   | WSIS Award  | 2015 | 01 Award                             |
| SL. | Name of Initiative  | Name of Prize & Recognition                                 | Year | Year wise Total Awards & Recognition |
| 1.  | Access to Information Programme                               | Public Administration Award 2016                            | 2016 | 09 Awards                            |
| 2.  | SPS for increased Transparency, Efficiency and Responsiveness | WSIS Award  | 2016 |                                      |
| 3.  | Krishoker Janala  | WSIS Award  | 2016 |                                      |
| 4.  |   | Brac Manthan Digital Innovation Award                       | 2016 |                                      |
| 5.  | Autism Barta  | National Mobile App Award                                   | 2016 |                                      |
| 6.  | Environment Clearance Certificate                             | WSIS Award  | 2016 |                                      |
| 8.  | Police Clearance Certificate                                  | Public Toilet App:<br>Brac Manthan Digital Innovation Award | 2016 |                                      |

|    |                  |            |      |  |
|----|------------------|------------|------|--|
| ৯। | Teacher's Portal | WSIS Award | 2016 |  |
|----|------------------|------------|------|--|

| SL. | Name of Initiative   | Name of Prize & Recognition   | Year | Year wise Total Awards & Recognition |
|-----|--|---|------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Multimedia Talking Book                                    | WSIS Award  | 2017 | 08 Awards                            |
| 2.  |  | Henry Viscardi Achievement Award  | 2017 |                                      |
| 3.  | Telemedicine Programme                                     | WSIS Award  | 2017 |                                      |
| 4.  | Autism Barta   | BASIS National ICT Award  | 2017 |                                      |
| 5.  |  | Asia Pacific ICT Award (APICTA)   | 2017 |                                      |
| 6.  | e-Nothi  | The Open Group Awards for Enterprise Architecture                             | 2017 |                                      |
|     |  | WSIS Award  | 2017 |                                      |
| 7.  | Bangladesh national Portal                                 | 'President's award on The Open Group Awards for Innovation and Excellence, UK | 2017 |                                      |
| 8.  | a2i's Social Media in Public Service Innovation Initiative | WSIS Award  | 2017 |                                      |

| SL. | Name of Initiative  | Name of Prize & Recognition   | Year | Year wise Total Awards & Recognition |
|-----|---|---|------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Police Clearance Certificate  | WSIS Award  | 2018 | 10 Recognition & Awards              |
| 2.  | Access to Information (a2i) Programme                                       | International Invention, Innovation & Technology Exhibition" (ITEX) Award | 2018 |                                      |
| 3.  | Muktapaath-'e-Learning' Platform  | WSIS Award  | 2018 |                                      |
| 4.  | 'ek-seba'   | "President Award of India" by Open Group                                  | 2018 |                                      |
| 5.  | UN South-South Cooperation Award  |   | 2018 |                                      |
| 6.  | UNESCO Award for Empowering Physically Challenged People through Innovation |   | 2018 |                                      |
| 7.  | a2i iLab got 2 gold medals and 1 silver medal at ITEX                       |   | 2018 |                                      |
| 8.  | 'ek-seba'   | Asia Pacific ICT Award (APICTA)   | 2018 |                                      |

|     |                                  |  |      |  |
|-----|----------------------------------|--|------|--|
| 9.  | Muktopaath 'e-Learning' Platform | Sohel Samad Award                          | 2018 |  |
| 10. | Telemedicine                     | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Commonwealth Digital Award | 2018 |  |

| SL. | Name of Initiative  | Name of Prize & Recognition  | Year        | Year wise Total Awards & Recognition |
|-----|---|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Mobile Based Age Verification before Marriage Registration to Stop Child Marriage | <b>WSIS</b>  | <b>2019</b> | <b>02 Awards</b>                     |
| 2.  | Teachers Portal   | <b>WSIS</b>  | <b>2019</b> |                                      |
| 3.  | 333   | BASIS National ICT Awards, Asia Pacific ICT alliance Awards and Gov-insider Innovation Awards  | <b>2019</b> |                                      |
| 4.  | Ekshop  | Asia Pacific ICT Alliance Awards for being the best in Consumer Business and Retail Category (Competing with 139 platforms from 19 countries); the ITEX Award as Best International Innovation 2019 by ITEX (The innovation conclave of 37 countries spanning Asia, Middle east and pacific regions); the prestigious National ICT Award 2019 awarded by BASIS; the coveted Bangladesh Innovation Award 2019 by the Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF) for Best Process Innovation | <b>2019</b> |                                      |
| 5   | i-lab   | PNPK-ITEX Award 2019 Silver medal<br>Ramp Pump- ITEX Award 2019 Silver medal<br>Used Cooking Oil- ITEX Award 2019 Silver Medal<br>Smart White Cane- ITEX Award Silver Medal  |             |                                      |



## 7. Achievements in Gender Equality and Gender Empowerment:

### 7.1. Women Innovation Camp

The Women Innovation Camp competition was organized by the Access to Information (a2i) Program and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs jointly. This competition aims to identify some significant problems of women in the society and to provide them with a possible solution 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. Through Women Innovation Camp, 10 projects have been funded for piloting.



### 7.2 Women entrepreneurship in UDCs:

Since the early days of a2i project, the mandatory involvement of one female entrepreneur 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 an initiative to encourage women entrepreneurship and women empowerment is facing various challenges which are discussed later in this section.



**7.3 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.

**7.4 Gender Strategy:** The a2i Gender Strategy was adopted in 2015. This document lists key indicators and priority actions for 2015-2016. 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

**7.5 Marginal Women's Banking Services:** The government of Bangladesh provides a huge amount of cash assistance each year through various programs under the social safety net program. If all these cash and financial services are available in electronic means, it will accelerate financial services. Women are the main beneficiaries of this program. The payment of allowances of social security program is provided to the beneficiaries by using National Identity Card. Meanwhile, field level preparatory work is ongoing with Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Liberation War Affairs and Department of Disaster Management.



**7.6 Training and Skill Development of Marginalized People:** Different activities for marginalized women and small ethnic groups are being adopted from a2i. Most of the beneficiaries of the initiative taken under this program are women. The training for women and disabled people, skills-based workplace creations etc. are in progress. Training for women Entrepreneurs of the Qaomi Madrasa, including marginalized women and UDC, is being arranged continuously. Apart from this, arrangements are made to train private and public officials in the a2i's various activities. Organizations are encouraged to ensure the presence of women.



## **8. Risks and Mitigation:**

The primary risks that a2i has faced in the overall journey are as follows:

- a. Lack of ownership from relevant government agencies resulted in the turbulent future of numerous initiatives related to e-governance and digitalization of government services.
- b. Change in authority created the reluctance of the government bodies to accept and replicate new and innovative ideas and hampered the effective implementation of the programme.
- c. Lack of scientific and appropriate approaches, tools of research, monitoring and insufficient results management for managing its knowledge management activities.
- d. Due to lack of institutionalization, the entire functionality and modality of the activities of the project goes through significant risky nature of work.
- e. Lack of Timely funding shortage interrupts the implementing of the programmes and developing products and services, maintaining its huge activities and to coordinate with other organizations, i.e. all ministries, departments, and field administrations.

### **Mitigation plan:**

- a. Continuous collaboration and communication are taking place with relevant government agencies in order to motivate the authority to take ownership of the products.
- b. In collaboration with implementing partners and continuous research and analysis, scientific data-based approaches, tools of research, monitoring and results management mechanism are being implemented for managing its knowledge management activities.
- c. In order to ensure institutionalization of the project, steps are being taken and the process of establishing a2i as a Trust is on the progressive stage.
- d. Alternate fund mobilization and fund collection process is being undertaken and a specialized team of resource mobilization has been formed for this purpose.

## **9. Major Challenges and mitigation**

There is an urgent need for more efficient and inclusive public service delivery institutions that will deliver the level and quality of services necessary to support the population of a middle-income country. Factors contributing to the key problem that this programme addresses, i.e. weak performance of government services in addressing the needs of underserved communities in Bangladesh, include an archaic public service delivery model that poses fundamental

challenges to promoting access for financially and socially disadvantaged groups. Their illiteracy rate is quite high, and additionally they often lack power and self-confidence, and suffer physical, institutional and social constraints. The conventional process requires the citizen to appear before one or more public officials' multiple times during office hours, fill in complicated forms, obtain authentication/notarization from government agents, and often wait in long lines. This face-to-face delivery model makes services less accessible to a large segment of the population who are either unable or face substantial difficulties to undertake travel to government offices.

Complicated administrative processes also give rise to the need for intermediaries to steer the recipient through a difficult and often non-transparent series of hurdles. These intermediaries not only increase the cost of service for the recipient but also further incentivize vested interests to maintain the status-quo.

As in many developing countries, public sector services in Bangladesh tend to be siloed. Inside the government machinery, the effects of these silos can be difficult to perceive, but the impacts become clearer closer to citizens, the end users. When public services are layered on top of each other, and designed and delivered in a fragmented fashion, value for citizens falls through the cracks. Yet, the sole reason that public services exist is to benefit citizens at different stages of their lives in a meaningful way. Those in the most vulnerable positions, particularly rural women, children and the elderly are usually the ones who suffer most from fragmentation and are usually some of the biggest service recipients. Consequently, public services can add complexity to already difficult lives (for example, through opaque and convoluted application procedures, lack of information, etc.), rather than helping people to find sustainable solutions.

Even though the government offices have published Citizens' Charter, there is also no systematic mechanism to submit grievances against the Charters and receive redress. Also, despite attempts to implement the National Integrity Strategy, lack of transparency and accountability abounds in public and private spheres of society in general.

In this day and age of alternative service delivery options and the nearly ubiquitous presence of digital technologies, Bangladeshi citizens are no longer complacent about government services which have traditionally been slow and unresponsive. Despite achieving rapid successes in terms of introducing numerous technology-based solutions, their reach and impact have lagged behind.

Incentives to innovate are also lacking in the public sector. The pervasive, rule-based and hierarchical culture discourages innovators and potential change makers from within the government from breaking the established order. Thus, most civil servants feel that maintaining the status quo is the safest mode of operation. To put it simply, while one may not necessarily be rewarded for improving something, they can certainly expect to incur punitive measures if the attempt at improvement is unsuccessful, especially as it is deemed to exhibit a lack of respect for the established way of doing things.

Lack of a data-enabled policy environment is leading to prevalence of resource allocation decisions and policy making based on gut instinct or intuition. Lack of standard approaches and

protocols, territoriality and inconsistency in format leads to duplication and inadequate use of data by other agencies. The data that ultimately lands on the tables of decision makers thus usually carry little meaning or value in terms of decision support or evidence.

A significant aspect of movement towards citizen-centric, digitized service delivery includes digitization of payments from the government to citizens and vice versa. The digitization that has taken place in the country so far is mostly in terms of Person to Person (P2P), and not Government to Person (G2P) or Person to Government (P2G). The poor and unbanked are unable to access mainstream/formal financial services due to weak business case from the perspective of traditional banks. There is also a lack of skills to innovate pro-poor financial products/services resulting in inadequate digital financial services products and services due to lack of uptake/usage. Moreover, policy reform is top-down, regulation-oriented and supply-centric and efforts at digital finance ecosystem building remain fragmented and siloed.

Bangladesh's emergence as a rapidly developing country is shadowed by evolving and increasingly complex socio-economic, environmental and demographic challenges. Although the country is renowned globally as a development laboratory boasting a thriving social innovation scene, it lacks the platforms and channels necessary for grassroots innovators to link up effectively with private sector, academia and leverage the whole-of-government apparatus to solve public service delivery problems. And the handful of aspiring social entrepreneurs that exist find it incredibly difficult to find mentors, secure investment and in many cases, to even start businesses that address unmet public service delivery needs.

#### **Mitigation Plan:**

To improve the archaic public service delivery model and enable the citizens to receive public services within a timely and cost effective manner with least hassle, a2i introduced several initiatives targeting towards bringing public services at citizen's doorstep through diversified service access points ultimately reducing the hassle of the citizen and improve the transparency and accountability of the government agencies. It has also ensured that equal service is also delivered to the financially and socially disadvantaged groups. Furthermore, the innovative initiatives have eliminated the need for the complicated administrative procedures and intermediaries to significant extent.

a2i has also reduced the complexities derived due to the siloed nature of the public sector by increasing the coordination and integration among government agencies ultimately benefiting the citizens.

Through initiatives such as Bangladesh National Portal, Service Process Simplification and Digital Service Design Lab, the systems and services provided by various government organizations are now not only being made available to every citizen, also more citizens are being aware of the services and the easier process of availing them.

a2i has been the pioneer in implementing the vision of Digital Bangladesh and has incorporated the proper and effective usage of modern technology in the public service delivery system which has brought about a significant change in this particular sector.

Since Civil servant's lack of interest to innovate, with effective collaboration with relevant agencies a2i has introduced capacity development program for the civil servants where the importance and significance of innovation in public service delivery was emphasized. Along with that, incentive model was introduced for civil servants to be more concentrated in innovation.

To introduce data driven strategically decision-making process in public sector, a2i has had significant contributions. a2i has introduced SDG tracker in this regard. Along with that, continuous research, monitoring and analysis on incorporating more data analysis and scientific decision-making process in government's functional modality is on the process.

Through a2i's Digital Financial Lab, pro-poor financial products/services and inclusive digital financial products and services are being launched to ensure inclusive financial services for everyone including marginal, traditionally excluded and discriminated aiming at building a digital finance ecosystem.

Through a2i's innovation fund and other initiatives, social entrepreneurs and grassroots innovators are being facilitated along with private sector, academia by leveraging the whole-of-government apparatus to solve public service delivery problems. Through this effective collaboration, ultimate goal of serving the citizen with the best solution is being served.

## **10. Lessons learned**

The following lessons has been identified:

Bangladesh has disproved the ill-informed Kissingerian theory of being a "*Basket Case*" and emerged with the global image of being a "*Development Miracle*". The country is now aspiring to achieve the vision of "*Digital Bangladesh*" by 2021, "*Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*" by 2030 and "*Innovative Bangladesh*" by 2041. The year 2021 will mark the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence and the jubilations will be accompanied by the achievement of the "Vision 2021", the seed of which was sown by the Government of Bangladesh in 2008.

Projects like Access to Information (a2i) – II of the Government of Bangladesh has tirelessly worked to turn the dream of "*Digital Bangladesh*" a reality, propelling the challenging, complex, and breathtakingly behemoth of a task well within the realm of achievement. Such innovative projects within the Government of Bangladesh have inspired developing and developed nations alike to bring unprecedented transformation through public service innovation that results in an efficient, effective, accountable, transparent, and decentralized system of governance.

Indeed, the Government of Bangladesh has made remarkable strides and led exemplary feats over the last decade. The country is now becoming a poverty-free middle-income nation and striving towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. Bangladesh is also working to

create skilled and creative human resources and in turn, become a globally integrated economic and commercial hub with the established operating principles of environmentally sustainable practices. Bangladesh has made several impressive progresses with the meeting of the MDG goals, and it is on track to achieve the SDG targets within the year 2030. The mid-term review of the perspective plan (2010-2021), implementation review of the 6th Five Year Plan (6FYP), and the mid-term review of the 7th Five Year plan (7FYP) have demonstrated Bangladesh's superior implementation capabilities for its development priorities.

As this exciting progress suggests, Bangladesh is ready to realize the long-term plans of its government in the coming decades. Aspire to innovate (a2i) is well-positioned to leverage and build on the solid foundation created by Access to Information-II project. a2i can significantly contribute to the government to become successful in its development plans and reach its target for the "*Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*" by 2030 and "*Innovative Bangladesh*" by 2041.

Previously, Access to Information-II project has worked with the focus on improving public service delivery, increasing transparency, and strengthening governance with the ultimate goal to ensure a citizen-centric culture of innovation in civil service and make services more inclusive, affordable, reliable, and easier to access. The agenda of "*Digital Bangladesh*" has inspired a2i programme to draw on from a wide range of innovative projects that cumulatively completes the much sought goal of rapid digital transformation.

The a2i project is inspired by the issues that lead to the success of these previous projects. The new plan also builds on the questions that didn't work well in the past and has exciting and immense possibilities to be tapped into. Both of these factors are shared herewith in the bulletized lessons learned section:

***Digitization Improves the Delivery of Services to Citizens (Reducing TCV: Time, Cost, and the Number of Visits):***

Over the past ten years, service process simplification (SPS) and digitization initiatives of the Government of Bangladesh has been able to reduce the time, cost, and number of visits that are required by the citizens to avail public services. According to the analysis by Access to Information - II based on 85 TCV studies, it is projected that, in terms of time, costs and visits, citizens have saved around 1.92 billion person days, 8.14 billion US dollars, and 1 billion visits since 2010. This process of service digitization was successful because of the coordinated effort and buy-in of the cabinet and other respected ministries. Bringing together relevant ministry officials, enhancing their capacity, and providing them with a simplified road map has helped the officials to visualize the simplification and digitization process, thereby increasing the number of simplified and digitized services rapidly.

***Simplification before the Digitization Effort:***

While digitization is crucial, it is essential to focus on service simplification prior to any digitization efforts are exerted. Plenty of government services have been improved through service



simplifications and without any single interventions from the digitization process. Access to Information-II project trained civil servants to apply service process simplification (SPS) by mapping out the entire service delivery processes end-to-end, eliminating any unnecessary or non-value adding steps. The civil servants were thus able to redesign the services to be more easily accessible to citizens from a higher number of delivery-points. These results were accompanied with detailed profiles containing descriptions, process maps, relevant fees, documents needed to access the new, simplified services as well as grievance redressal processes, associated rules, policies, and laws. This whole process not only tells the story of an extraordinary service delivery reform but also points to the unprecedented proactive disclosure on the part of the government.

***Last-mile delivery points (Public-Private Partnership Sustainability):***

In Bangladesh, government offices at the district and sub-district levels provide a wide range of public services that are labor-intensive and time consuming for the service providers and recipients alike. Citizens, a majority of whom reside and work in rural areas, typically have to travel long distances to government offices in urban or semi-urban areas preceding income and incurring additional costs such as transportation, accommodation, and food to access even the basic services. To address these challenges faced by the citizens, Government of Bangladesh established Union Digital Centres to deliver hundreds of public -services to the underserved more efficiently, reliably, and at low cost through grassroots one-stop centers that are hosted in government organizations but run by the private entrepreneurs. Though this unique PPP arrangement, entrepreneurs around the country are leveraging modern technologies to deliver both free and fee-based public and private services to the citizens. Increasingly, the Digital Centres are catalyzing financial inclusion through agent banking and by connecting low-income communities to the broader digital economy via Assisted Rural E-Commerce.

Public-Private-partnership (PPP) model played a significant role in setting these last-mile service delivery points through Digital Centres. Adopting a strategy of bottom-up innovation facilitated by PPP was the critical reason why Digital Centers have been such a successful intervention. It proactively sought out ways by which the poorest, most marginalized citizens could be engaged in the mainstream economy in a '*participatory*' and '*empowering*' way. Through the empowerment of local citizens by creating a scope of entrepreneurship, the Digital Centres have been successful in bringing public and private services to the doorstep of the citizens. The model for the digital centers has also created a reduced risk space for entrepreneurs as the government is providing the physical space and initial technical support, in addition to entrepreneur's capacity development initiatives. The entrepreneurs in effect became the government's last-mile delivery points at the grassroots level and proved to be instrumental in engaging citizens in the co-creation of a human-centered public service delivery ecosystem in Bangladesh. Being able to create an organic PPP model where public and private partners are relying on each other and providing support to each other has been crucial to Digital Centres' success.

While this has created immense opportunities for the local entrepreneurs, financial sustainability of the digital centers are yet to reach the desired level. Also, challenges remain to integrate women entrepreneurs into this system. Even with the scope of equal access and opportunity to become Digital Centre entrepreneurs, the number of women taking on this opportunity or remaining in this role is much less than expected.

### ***Innovation Culture within the Government***

Nurturing the culture of innovation within the government is often overlooked. But capacity development initiatives like empathy training has been tremendously successful in implanting the seed of public service innovation across the government. Till now, over 7,000+ civil servants have been trained on public service innovation through empathy training model of a2i, bringing civil-servants closer to the citizens more than ever before. This has resulted in a transformative change in the civil bureaucracy, the result of which has often been compared to an '*avalanche-effect*' that brings the culture of initiating change, accepting change, and even creating a risk space to experiment, learn and improve services. Over the last six years, 1,500+ innovations have been piloted to enhance public service delivery and reduced TCVs.

By providing access to innovative and supportive space along with proper tools and training, civil servants have been empowered to place themselves in the citizens' shoes that motivated them with the sense of purpose to drive transformations in public service delivery space. While initiatives like this have made outstanding contributions in bringing out the innovation mindset of Bangladesh Civil Service, most of these innovations have not sustained when the innovator leaves the organization because of promotion, transfer or retirement. Thus, institutionalization of innovation within the government still requires plenty of work. In addition to some incentive mechanisms that were piloted, most of these efforts are currently scattered throughout the government that needs recognition for its innovation efforts and demonstration of sustainable results.

### ***National Integrity Strategy (NIS)***

The Cabinet Division has developed a framework through its National Integrity Strategy (NIS) with the purpose of providing a system of governance that creates trust among citizens through increasing the level of independence, accountability, efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the state and non-state institutions to improve governance and reduce corruption in a comprehensive manner. NIS has initiated institutional, and administrative arrangements and procedures that can enable and support transparency and accountability in public officeholders and institutions. More focus is still needed to be ensured on enhancing the technical and professional competence of the players within the government to make sure that NIS is being implemented to its fullest intended capacity. Furthermore, integrating and aligning service delivery mechanisms across government and non-government institutions with NIS standards still requires a reinvigorated focus.

### ***Data Innovation***

General Economic Division (GED) of the Planning Commission has developed set guidelines to implement and monitor the SDGs. a2i, in collaboration with GED and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), and with guidance from the Prime Minister’s Office, developed the SDG Tracker to create a data repository for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs. Initiatives have also been taken to sensitize government authorities to provide accurate and quality data. While the data collection process has been improved across the government, data-driven decision making based on this vast pool of information is yet to take root within the government.

### ***Nurturing Social Innovation***

Significant progress has been made by the citizens to take on social challenges through social innovation in Bangladesh. Interventions like Innovation Lab has ensured a plethora of job by fostering a hands-on, action-oriented approach to tackle the biggest challenges faced by the society and the people, thereby laying a strong foundation for the citizens to come together and collaborate to devise some of the most innovative solutions in the country. The Service Innovation Fund (SIF) opened up unprecedented opportunities to incubate solutions from both government and non-government actors, thereby catalyzing the recognition and reward of novel and promising ideas. While social innovation ideas are pouring in and successful prototypes are being built and scale-up, commercialization of these social innovations is scarcely taking place. There are rooms for exciting new works for the proper marketing of the generated ideas.

### ***Financial Inclusion through Digitization and Increased Access***

To develop a system of financial inclusion for all, especially for the marginalized and the un-banked, digital financial ecosystem initiatives have been taken with joint collaboration of Bangladesh Bank, Finance Division, and Access to Information-II project. The project played the coordinating role into congregating all the major players from both public and private sectors and introducing new ideas and international best practices for integration within this ecosystem. In addition, the project provided necessary technical support to ensure that digital financial ecosystem comes to fruition with the support from all the respected partners. These initiatives have enabled access to the rural poor and unbanked population to seamlessly obtain the Digital Financial Services (DFS). Digital Financial ecosystem as part of its inclusive approach also included the Social Safety Net programme that ensures smooth digital Government to Persons (G2P) fund transfers that is increasingly fast, secure, transparent and cost-efficient. The integration of digital financial services through other outlets like Union Digital Centres have also increased the access and usage rate of the services. Persons to Government (P2G) fund transfers are also being integrated into this digital financial services ecosystem as part of the piloting stage.

## **11. Financial Reporting:**

| Budget Period (2012-2019) |       | in USD |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| expenditure details       | Total | 2012   | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|                           |       |        |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

|         |                   |         |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
|---------|-------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Budget  | <b>20,612,381</b> | 664,109 | 1,705,528 | 2,630,868 | 2,640,968 | 3,092,427 | 2,305,747 | 4,550,396 | 3,022,338 |
| Expense | <b>18,955,108</b> | 607,366 | 1,553,723 | 2,720,695 | 2,121,103 | 2,543,963 | 2,086,525 | 4,644,490 | 2,677,244 |
| %       | <b>91.96</b>      | 91.46   | 91.10     | 103.41    | 80.32     | 82.26     | 90.49     | 102.07    | 88.58     |

## 12. Conclusion:

So far, a2i has achieved major progress in this year with the goal of working to enhance transparency and improving public service delivery at citizens' doorsteps under a simplified process by reducing time, cost and number of visits. a2i is fully determined to hold the state of being successful in all areas and provide service to the citizen's utmost satisfaction. Though there is a lot of achievement, lessons learnt in this year, a2i had gone through various challenges while working.

Access to Information-II project has worked with the focus on improving public service delivery, increasing transparency, and strengthening governance with the ultimate goal to ensure a citizen-centric culture of innovation in civil service and make services more inclusive, affordable, reliable, and easier to access. The agenda of "*Digital Bangladesh*" has inspired a2i programme to draw on from a wide range of innovative projects that cumulatively completes the much sought goal of rapid digital transformation.

The a2i project is inspired by the issues that lead to the success of these previous projects. The new plan also builds on the questions that didn't work well in the past and has exciting and immense possibilities to be tapped into.

Moreover, continuation of the current digital transformation, institutionalizing the innovation culture, playing the catalyst role to establish Financial innovation ecosystem, and private sector intervention for enhancing innovation culture are the key areas that need to be continued and addressed.

However, in order for the successful continuation and up gradation of the current initiatives along with initiation of new activities, institutionalization and ownership of relevant development partners is essential. With proper institutionalization, not only will the current initiatives will be benefitted, also the project will be empowered to discover new and challenging sectors to walk upon resulting in coming up with commendable ventures.