

**Minutes of
9th Meeting of the Project Executive Board
Knowledge for Development Management (K4DM) Project for ERD**

Chairperson : Ms. Fatima Yasmin, Secretary, Economic Relations Division

Meeting Date: 14 June 2020

Time : 11:00 AM

Venue : **Via Zoom Meeting Software**

*List of the board members attended the meeting attached here in **Annex 1**.*

The 9th Board Meeting of Knowledge for Development Management (K4DM) project was held on 14 June 2020 using Zoom Meeting platform where Ms. Fatima Yasmin, Secretary, Economic Relations Division chaired the meeting.

The Chair introduced and welcomed all the representatives attending the meeting.

Following the introduction of each participant with the consent of the Chair, Mr. Amal Krishna Mandal, Joint Secretary (UN-1) and Deputy Project Director of K4DM project made agenda wise presentations which were as follows:

Agenda 1: Endorsement of the approved minutes of 8th Board Meeting;

Agenda 2: Implementation status of the decision taken in 8th Board Meeting;

Agenda 3: Review of progress of project implementation till date;

Agenda 4: Budget relocated with the intra economic code -GOB Fund;

Agenda 5: Status of the New Project Formulation;

Agenda 6: Future of the K4DM (In the context of COVID-19 pandemic situation);

Agenda 7: Revision of existing TPP (Partial);

Agenda 8: Miscellaneous;



Agenda 1: Endorsement of the approved minutes of 8th Board Meeting

The 8th meeting of the Project Executive Board was held on 8th of December 2019. The minutes of the meeting was distributed amongst all concerned. As there were no further feedback/comments, the board endorsed the minutes of the 8th board meeting.

Agenda 2: Implementation status of decision taken in 8th Board meeting

The board was updated with the implementation status of the decisions of the 8th meeting of Project Executive Board which were as follows:

Decisions	Implementation Status
(i) The board endorsed the minutes of the 7th Executive board meeting;	The meeting minutes was duly endorsed and distributed among participants;
(ii) The board endorsed the achievements so far of the Project activities;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K4DM project already organised an achievement showcasing in order to mobilize resources for the 2nd phase of the project.• Honorable Secretary of Cabinet Division Mr. Khandker Anwarul Islam attended the event as the Chief Guest while Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh was present as the Guest of Honor at the event.• The event was attended by several development partners and donors like Danida (Denmark Aid), SDC (Swiss Development Cooperation), USAID, The Asia Foundation, DFID, UK AID along with ministry officials of ERD.• SDC (Swiss Development Cooperation) has expressed their soft interest for developing partnership with ERD through K4DM project.
(iii) The board agreed in principal that the Project can be extended for 6 months from January till June 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K4DM Project received USD 145,500 in total for the duration of January- June 2020.• The project has been implementing activities based on a project implementation plan approved by the senior project management including NPD.

Agenda 3: Review of progress of project implementation till date:

Deputy Project Director (DPD) of K4DM updated the board members on the progress of planned activities of K4DM including budgetary utilization.

- **Utilization of Project Fund**

It is important to note that, due to COVID-19 pandemic, most of the planned activities could not be implemented. And thus it has impacted the budget expenditure.

RADP allocation for the Project in 2019-20 was BDT 240.00 lakh (USD 282,000) and the Project spent BDT 193.22 (USD 227,500) lakh which is 80.50% of the RADP allocation. UNDP allocation for 2020 (January– June) was USD 145,500 and the delivery till date is USD 81,500 and the progress is approximately 55.32%. But out of total allocation of the TPP which BDT 24.00 crore (USD 3 million), total utilization of fund is BDT 8.83 crore (USD 1.06 Million) and the progress is 35.33%. It was explained in the meeting that financial progress of K4DM from 2014-2020 June is 35.33%. and the Physical progress is 78%.

It was because:

after the initiation of the project, the project lacked leadership as it had 5 NPDs in 4 years, and concrete ideas for implementation. The project was unable to absorb big funds and thus UNDP released small amounts of funds as per the demand. K4DM received in total USD 1.06 million between 2014 to 2020 and has delivered 100% of the amount received. However, as the initial commitment in the project document was USD 3.00 million, the delivery above is shown as 35%;

The financial status of 2020 has been shared as follows:

From GoB Fund, from 2019-2020, the total budget was BDT 7 lakhs (USD 8,300). Out of this, the project spent a BDT 4.82 lakhs (USD 5,700) so far. It is expected that the project will not spend from the GoB fund in June 2020. Therefore, our forecast for the total expenditure from GoB remains BDT 4.82 lakhs (USD 5,700). This leaves the remaining balance of the GoB fund at BDT 2.18 lakhs (USD 2,600).

- From the UNDP Fund, from January to June 2020, the total budget was USD 145,500, out of which USD 81,500 was spent so far. It is expected that in June 2020, the project will spend an additional 40,000 USD. This brings the total expenditure to USD 121,500. The remaining balance of the UNDP Fund is USD 24,000.

- **Activity-wise progress**

- *Revision and Implementation of Programming Manuals-NEX and other Manuals (under Component -1)*

Within this reporting period (January-May 2020), no activity has been done under this component.

○ ***Operationalization of Information Repository in ERD (under Component -1)***

Relevant focal points of ERD are using the ERDPEDIA following the revised user manual. In order to make the user manual more effective and user-friendly K4DM project is planning to develop an audio-visual tutorial as per the recommendation from the refreshers course.

○ ***Strengthening collaboration on resource mobilization (under Component -1)***

- A study was conducted to identify the scopes and areas of resource mobilization for ERD and as follow up of the study a training on economic diplomacy was organized for the ERD and other ministry officials on 1st October 2019. But within the reporting period no activity was initiated due to COVID-19.

○ ***Supporting strategic research/collaboration with Eminent Persons (under Component -1)***

Strategic partnership has been developed with the eminent persons of the country and the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) conducted four thematic dialogues which helped the policy makers in making new policy decisions. But within the reporting period no activity was initiated due to COVID-19.

○ ***Promotion of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (under Component -2)***

A South-South cooperation cell has been established within the UN Wing and functioned regularly under the respective desk. A high-level task force has been formed and the first meeting of the task force was held on 24th November (2019). As per the Task Force decision a meeting was held on January 2020 with MoFA and a2i to develop and finalize an annual workplan for the South-South Cooperation. A day long training for developing a common understanding on South-South and Triangular Cooperation among ERD officials and focal persons from 27 different line ministries was held on 12 January 2020 at NEC-2. Accomplished academician Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Professor, University of Dhaka conducted the training. This training has helped in developing a conceptual understanding on South-South Cooperation tools, methods, scope of works and best practices around the globe.

○ ***NRB Engagement for National Development (under Component -2)***

- 3 new Project proposals were received from the NRBs and processed through the NRB web portal (nrb.gov.bd) and tagged the projects with respective ministries for their vetting process.
- The NRB portal was revised and updated as per the feedback from the team and desk officer to simplify the portal application for the users. A separate section for the news of implemented projects and simplification of PIE has been inserted.

○ ***Support to Preparation of National Human Development Report (NHDR) (Component 3)***

- Accelerating coordination activities of publishing National Human Development Report (NHDR) a follow-up meeting to discuss the publication of the National Human Development Report was held on the 17th of February 2020. Decisions were taken to follow-up the Writer's Pool and distribution of the responsibility of writing on the five thematic area of NHDR which includes Climate Change, Employment for

Youth Groups, Teenager's Dream for Future Bangladesh, Inequality and Human Development and Peace & Prosperities among the writers, and to determine a timeline for NHDR publication.

- Another follow up meeting to review the progress of NHDR writer's pool activities was held on 16th March 2020 at NEC-2 Conference Room. In the meeting writers presented the structure of each chapter. Decisions were taken to insert the updated data from government and non-government sources.
- It is assumed that the report will contain information on post COVID-19 human development scenario, possible challenges and potential future opportunities for human development in Bangladesh regarding the global pandemic. The NHDR is expected to be published in 2021 as a part of the celebration of 50 years independence of Bangladesh.

○ **Capacity Development Programmes (Component Crosscutting)**

Due to COVID pandemic most of the planned activities of capacity development could not be implemented. Therefore, the training programme included a day long training for developing a common understanding on South-South and Triangular Cooperation among ERD officials and focal persons from 27 different line ministries was held on January 12, 2020 at NEC-2.

Agenda 4: Budget relocated with the intra economic code -GOB Fund:

The DPD explained in the meeting that fund from GoB allocation required to be relocated within the economic code for the payment of additional work allowances for the GoB Officials for project support (NPD, DPD and 02 Support staffs) for the extended period of next six months (July-December 2020). Therefore Taka 3.7 lakhs required to be re-allocated from Office Rent (Economic Code 3211131) to Additional Charge Allowances (Economic Code 3111338) as per the approved TAPP.

Agenda 5: Status of the New Project Formulation:

Within a limited budget, K4DM has had a very strong impact by enhancing capacity of ERD officials and affiliated ministries, establishing a south-south cell, for the first time ever successfully mobilizing and congregating NRBs, establishing an online knowledge repository called ERDpedia which contains all government documents since 1972, starting the process of formulating the National Human Development Report, and contributing to various knowledge products etc. And thus both UNDP and ERD think it is important to continue the good work but also take it to the next level, aligning it with the countries goals and ambitions. Moreover, there are some unfinished activities (NHDR) that are time bound and need to be completed by the first quarter of 2021.

Thus, based on the previous PSC recommendations new phase of project development has been initiated with innovative ideas that can build on current achievements and have a wide impact for the future of the country. A presentation was made by the international and national consultant on the zero draft of the project document they had drafted based on consultation with various stakeholders including but not limited to the SDG Coordinator from PMO, ERD, MoFA, BIDA, BEZA, Planning Commission, IMED and different line ministries, departments, divisions and authorities. However due to COVID-19, no physical meeting took place and it has been challenging arranging other important meetings. It is expected that, the project document formulation process will be completed by July 2020. Then the approval of the new project will be initiated.

A separate presentation was made by the consultants on the new Project Document of K4DM phase II which is attached as Annex 2.

Agenda 6: Extension K4DM (In the context of COVID-19 pandemic situation);

While it was acknowledged in the board that K4DM had already been extended 4 times and the last PSC had mentioned that no further extensions should be made, the COVID-19 situation was an unparalleled incident in the history of mankind and that it has been impossible to continue business as usual. The resident representative of UNDP requested for a blanket approval of all development projects (including TPP) and mentioned that if required this should be raised to the PMO/cabinet division level. In addition, the project manager mentioned that important work remained unfinished including the timebound NHDR and the new phase of project development and approval. Resource mobilization process is ongoing and if the situation improves, Project expediate the work towards mobilizing the resources.

During the meeting, the purpose of the NHDR was further expanded upon. The NHDR will be focusing on the state of human development in Bangladesh in the form 2018-2019 and will focus on inequality and gender as cross-cutting themes. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the scope of the NHDR will shift significantly. Therefore, the board decided to call an Advisor's Pool meeting and consult Dr. Selim Jahan to discuss future direction of the NHDR.

The K4DM Project will be finalizing the workplan from July to December 2020 proposed at the board meeting through joint review with the UN Wing and UNDP. The RR felt that certain activities may be outside of the scope of the timeframe proposed, and therefore there is a need to revisit the workplan.

It is important to note that through an official Achievement Showcasing Dinner K4DM has liaised with donors who appreciated K4DM's achievements with the Swiss Agency for Development and Coordination (SDC) showing a soft commitment of investment. If the situation improves, further resource mobilization efforts will be made with other development partners. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, K4DM has decided to initiate extensive work by engaging different bi and multi-lateral donors, private sector, civil society to support the government to address the longer-term impacts of the crisis. K4DM has positioned itself to form the bridge between civil society and government policymakers by launching a series of webinars under the title "The Big Rethink". The first seminar of the series focuses on NRB engagement in the Post-COVID era, while the larger seminar will take place after the 2020 budget on short term responsive governance measures to facilitate economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. A short study will also be facilitated by K4DM and the webinars will follow up with policy recommendations.

Agenda 7: Revision of existing TPP ~~(P-114)~~;

DPD stressed that since K4DM project has been extended 4th times and will complete in June 2020. If the board approves the next extension for another six months (July to December 2020) for the 5th times, as per the rules the existing TAPP may require to be revised with the project length and GOB budget intra code relocation (as stated in the Agenda-04).

Agenda 8: Miscellaneous

Finally, the DPD of K4DM expressed that K4DM provided protective gear for ERD officials given the situation of COVID-19 which was highly appreciated by all. K4DM is expecting the FAPAD Audit report which was conducted in 18th March 2020. The copy of the audit report will be shared with the Chair of the Board as soon as it is received by the Project.

Decisions:

- The board approved and endorsed the minutes of the 8th board meeting;
- The board agreed in principle that the Project will be extended for 6 months with no cost from July to December 2020 and accordingly the TAPP of the Project needs to be revised following the Government procedure;
- The board provided initial comments on the new Project Document of phase II which will be shared with the members for validation; ~~Strong recommendations came to support ERD with trade negotiations;~~
- The formulation process of National Human Development Report (NHDR) should be continued and completed by 2021. In this regard, meeting with advisor's pool and writer's pool should be organized in consultation with Dr. Selim Jahan to determine the broad theme;
- In terms of the theme COVID-19 this may be included in a separate chapter in NHDR based on the advise received from Dr. Selim Jahan.
- The workplan, budget and timeline of extended period (July– December 2020) of K4DM will be revisited in a participatory manner along with UN wing officials, UNDP and K4DM project team;
- Board recommended to reallocate the GoB fund following the government procedure;

Having no other agenda to discuss, the chair concluded the meeting by thanking all.



(Ms. Fatima Yasmin)
Secretary
Economic Relations Division
Ministry of Finance