



Private Sector Engagement Through Development Co-operation in Bangladesh

**Policy Recommendations & Actions Arising from a Technical Workshop on
Private sector engagement through development co-operation:
Opportunities for business to bring solutions to scale for the SDGs**

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On 4-5 February 2017, the Government of Bangladesh, Co-Chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, ICC Bangladesh and the Secretariat of the [Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation](#), held a technical workshop on private sector engagement in Dhaka with generous support from the Government of Germany. The workshop brought together public institutions, domestic and international private sector actors, civil society, trade unions, parliamentarians, development partners and research institutions. Representatives from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka also participated, sharing experiences and promoting peer learning.

Based on a comprehensive [country case study](#), the workshop aimed to:

- Identify positive examples and real opportunities to harness the ingenuity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and other domestic and multinational corporations in Bangladesh through development co-operation in order to contribute to sustainable development and grow business.
- Examine the most pressing concerns for private sector engagement in Bangladesh and how stakeholders across sectors can address concerns together.

The workshop is part of efforts by the Global Partnership to generate evidence on how private sector engagement through development co-operation delivers shared value for the people most in need and the private sector. The Global Partnership facilitates evidence-based and inclusive country dialogue on the drivers of effective private sector engagement (PSE) mobilised through the diverse modalities of development co-operation – from research, knowledge and information sharing to policy dialogue, technical assistance and capacity building, to finance. The work of the Global Partnership on PSE will inform global guidelines for effective private sector engagement through development co-operation. A draft country case study will be the basis for discussion.

Policy Recommendations & Actions Arising

A number of policy recommendations and actions were identified to improve the effectiveness of PSE through development co-operation in Bangladesh. They are part of a broader effort to reach the SDGs in Bangladesh. Participants noted the importance of ensuring that future efforts focus on how to take forward the policy recommendations and actions outlined below, with a particular emphasis on identifying lead institutions and partners, timelines and next steps:

1. INCLUSIVE, COUNTRY-LED DIALOGUE ON CO-CREATING SHARED VALUE FOR BUSINESSES, THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has made SDG implementation a priority with coordination occurring through the Prime Minister's Office. The government has undertaken efforts with the United Nations to localise the SDGs, including through consultation and awareness raising at local levels and with the private sector. A Citizen's Platform for SDGs exists that aims to track progress on the SDGs, sensitise policymakers on challenges in SDG implementation and offer a forum for information sharing on the SDGs. It works to promote further engagement by stakeholders to the benefit of the poorest and most marginalised in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the participants at the workshop noted the need for further awareness raising on the SDGs and for ensuring a shared vision and responsibility for their implementation across society and for the environment, in particular with the private sector. Action items include:

- ✓ **Expand and improve existing mechanisms of public-private dialogue** to support PSE on the SDGs. This should include the following elements:
 - **Participation:** engage a broad range of stakeholders beyond the usual and beyond major cities from the private sector (in particular small and medium-sized companies, social enterprises, etc. beyond large domestic firms and MNCs) and others (government, parliament, trade unions, civil society, development partners, etc.) from the inception/planning phases, empowering those left furthest behind
 - **Thematic focus:**
 - Prioritise dialogue on incentives and opportunities for private sector engagement around the SDGs and how development partners can support scaling up in practice.
 - Focus on nuts and bolts of partnerships, looking for synergies and gaps to be filled.
 - Place emphasis on training and capacity development for new dialogue partners (in particular small companies, in rural regions, etc.)
 - **Government leadership:**
 - Identify PSE opportunities at ministry level, including through sectoral consultations with the private sector;
 - Facilitate cross-sector dialogue to build trust and launch partnerships
 - **Information sharing:**
 - Ensure enough space for stakeholders to identify innovations to shared challenges

- Focus on best practice, information and knowledge sharing & lessons learned
- Develop mechanisms to allow for information to flow from the grassroots to the national level and back
- Use offline and online tools to ensure smart use of scarce resources
- Collect information and data on PSE from these and other efforts and make available in ways the data can be easily used. Additional mapping and analysis is needed.

2. BANGLADESH GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT FOR THE SDGs

The range of stakeholders involved in PSE through development co-operation from public and private sectors, as well as civil society, has given rise to inconsistencies in terms of PSE approaches, including with respect to partner selection, results monitoring, transparency and accountability. Stakeholders at the workshop noted the need for country specific guidelines for PSE in this context. In this regard, they identified the following action item:

- ✓ **Create shared guidelines for PSE in development co-operation and beyond through an inclusive consultation process that is country-driven and context-specific for Bangladesh.**

3. LEADERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE PSE THROUGH DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

- ✓ **Establish a national CEO Caucus** on PSE through development co-operation to provide momentum on SDG implementation, including through the promotion of best practice and results-based efforts that support the SDGs with the support of the private sector and development partners and work to leave no one behind. This should build on existing efforts of the PMO.
- ✓ **Establish a non-partisan caucus on PSE in parliament**, taking advantage of the existing composition of MPs which includes a majority of members from the private sector.

4. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR PSE TO REACH THE SDGs

Stakeholders requiring support to better participate in PSE include government, the private sector, particularly SMEs, and civil society organisations. However, current resource levels are insufficient. Development partners were encouraged to shift their focus beyond financing and support research, data generation, learning from failures and promoting good practices, providing specific opportunities for SMEs to take advantage of PSE windows. Action items include:

- ✓ **Allocate greater resources to capacity development for PSE** including through programmes that sensitise stakeholders on the opportunities for PSE through development co-operation and build the necessary skills to access resources and establish and maintain partnerships.
- ✓ **Build capacity of government institutions to ensure consistency in their approaches to PSE and on the business enabling environment**
- ✓ **Provide special support for awareness raising and capacity support for SMEs** to engage in PSE and on broader enabling environment issues, including through the establishment of special access points with government and development partners.

5. IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH ON PSE THROUGH DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

Participants at the workshop welcomed initiatives by the government to map the SDGs to government institutions and the Global Partnership's efforts to assess ways to adapt policies and approaches in PSE by development partners. They called for a mapping of how the private sector is contributing to the SDGs to complement these efforts and enable the identification of gaps, reduce duplication of efforts and highlight opportunities for partnership. The United Nations Development Programme Bangladesh country office is working on a mapping of private sector contributions to the SDGs which can be shared going forward. Complementing these efforts, there is a need to identify best practice in PSE through development co-operation to facilitate greater understanding of what PSE means and identify opportunities to replicate and/or scale successes.

Action items include:

- ✓ **Share information on existing mappings of PSE activities on the SDGs.**
- ✓ **Prepare an analysis of synergies, gaps and opportunities for PSE** based on the allocation of SDG responsibilities across government institutions, development partner support for PSE and private sector activities.
- ✓ **Compile best practices and resources on PSE in Bangladesh to promote greater understanding of PSE and examples others can replicate.**