Ex-post Evaluation of
Development of National ICT Infra-Network Project
in Bangladesh

- Executive Summary -

April, 2021

1. Project Overview

The Bangladesh National Information and Communication Network Development Project aimed to improve the transparency and efficiency of public administration in Bangladesh by strengthening cooperation between governmental institutes. Establishing basic ICT infrastructure would expand accessibility to technology and contribute to improved technical capacity, alongside the overall development of the ICT sector in Bangladesh.

The project scope includes constructing the National Monitoring Center and providing a network system to help diverse Bangladesh government ministries and divisions share information and cooperate. Optical cable guarantees a connection between ministries and departments located in Dhaka and the National ICT Center, while leased lines support engagement among public offices at the division and district levels and the Upazila centers. In total, the project connected 369 governmental institutes and provided technical training for local staff on monitoring and managing the network.

2. Evaluation Method and Results

1) Evaluation Method

The ex-post evaluation is based on evaluation criteria provided by OECD DAC and additional assessment standards for the environment and gender sectors. It also adheres to the EDCF's ex-post evaluation report guidelines.

2) Comprehensive Evaluation Results

The comprehensive evaluation grade is calculated based on the results of four criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability). The final evaluation result of the project is 3.5 (out of 4), which indicates that the project was 'successful.'

Criteria	Weight	Rating	Evaluation result
Relevance	25%	3.67 (relevant)	0.92
Efficiency	25%	3.33 (efficient)	0.83
Effectiveness	25%	4 (very effective)	1
Sustainability	25%	3 (sustainable)	0.75
Overall result		**3.5/4: Successful**	

3) Results by Evaluation Criterion

• Relevance: The project aligned with the country partnership strategy of South Korea and the national development plan of Bangladesh. It was planned at the request of the recipient country and satisfied the demand for conformity of development. In addition, the project corresponded to the first stage of the Bangladesh e-government development plan.

• Efficiency: Through local survey and interview, it was confirmed that communication and cooperation between stakeholders were appropriately implemented. Although the project lasted longer than originally planned, since the change enhanced the effectiveness of the project, overall, the project can be evaluated to have been efficiently executed.

• <u>Effectiveness</u>: It was confirmed that the main activities (operation and maintenance, education and training, consulting services) achieved or exceeded the planned goal of output. Despite the change in the method of providing network service, the modified plan effectively led to the revised outcomes and contributed to enhancing the effectiveness of the overall project.

• <u>Sustainability</u>: After the completion of the project, financial support for maintaining the network has been guaranteed by Bangladesh government. However, the local survey found an addigional demand for technical support and training, indicating a shortcoming in technical sustainability in terms of the technical capability of local staff.

3. Lessons and Recommendations

1) Lessons Learned

A. Success Factor

The project was designed in response to the needs of the recipient country; in particular, it aligned with the ICT development plan and national development strategy of Bangladesh.

Follow-up projects for maintaining and expanding the network established through this project have already been carried out and completed, and budget will continue to be supported by the central government.

B. Limitations

The network has been expanded on a large scale as per the revised plan; however, frequent power problems have been disrupting the use of the network service.

The lack of technical capability among local staff limits the maintenance and repair of the distributed network. There is demand for additional technical support.

2) Suggestions

Training and systems for professional development should be designed.

In ICT-related projects, a technological gap between the donor and recipient countries is often observed. Thus, from the initial stage of project, proper level of technology should be taken into account that can be sustained in the local context, as well as activities for bridging the technology gap between the two countries. Systems should be provided to enable local personnel who have completed technical training through invitational training sessions to enhance the skills and capabilities in the recipient country. To this end, it is necessary for local staff to maintain the scope and affiliation of the project for a certain period of time. Lastly, stable budget allocation should be guaranteed.

It is necessary to devise more diverse and effective ways of using the infrastructure and network in line with the e-government development strategy.

E-government can enable services in various fields, such as civil petitions, the resident registration system, government procurement, taxation, and tourism.