



Brief on Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth (EDIG) Programme

The UK Department for International Development (DfID) is supporting the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and The Asia Foundation (the Foundation) to implement the Economic Dialogue on Inclusive Growth (EDIG) Programme in close coordination with the General Economics Division (GED) of the Ministry of Planning. GED, as the Division that provides support and assistance to the Planning Commission and to both the National Economic Council and its Executive Committee in all matters relating to plan preparation and formulation of economic policies, will serve as the Government of Bangladesh anchor for the programme.

EDIG seeks to increase and enrich evidence-based policy dialogue about inclusive growth to contribute positively to poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. By helping to identify and address policy gaps and practical reforms, EDIG will contribute to sustaining the Government of Bangladesh's impressive growth track-record while ensuring that its impact is more broad-based and contributes to poverty alleviation. The programme will support six thematic research projects to develop a rich base of evidence about inclusive growth to support specific policy recommendations and provide a foundation for constructive dialogue. EDIG will connect policymakers and research institutions to elicit high-level discussions on existing and new evidence on inclusive growth in Bangladesh through two coordination bodies: an Inclusive Growth Policy Forum and a Bangladesh Research Network on Inclusive Growth.

The first research project is a sector diagnostic on inclusive growth; the final report will be shared and discussed at the first quarterly meeting of the IGPF. The five remaining research topics will be selected in consultation with the IGPF members during the quarterly meetings with the lead from GED. Based on initial review and analysis, target sectors may include leather, ICT, agro-processing, and light engineering, and other relevant sectors which have a greater potential to attract employment and economic growth.

Inclusive Growth Policy Forum (IGPF)

The IGPF will consist of influential high-level policy leaders from government entities, private sector actors, civil society organizations, think tanks, and the media. The IGPF will lead selection of the thematic research projects and dialogue themes based on consideration of the factors that drive decision-making and analysis of the degree to which new research and dialogue could influence policy reform. Within each theme, the aim is to ask how, when, and where uptake can have the most beneficial impact.

GED, in consultation with the EDIG programme team, has identified 31 high-level representatives from relevant government institutions, the private sector, reputed think tanks, and leading university academics. In addition, the IGPF may include some former senior bureaucrats (Secretary/Additional Secretary level) to leverage their experience, expertise, and insider insights to reach consensus. Under the leadership and facilitation of GED, the IGPF will sit quarterly with an aim to identify policy and evidence gaps related to inclusive growth. To achieve this goal, the project will employ a two-phased strategy:



Phase One: Creating an Enabling Environment for Inclusive Growth: As a primary, initial goal, the IGPF will: a) create a common understanding of inclusive growth and identify its reflection in the key government planning documents; and b) identify inclusive growth opportunities and develop monitoring tools following the guidelines of the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan.

Phase Two: Specific Reform Interventions to Influence Policies: The IGPF will be a consensus-based forum to ensure that research findings and evidence-based recommendations have an influence on policies. To that end, the project will: i) identify ongoing reform issues for which research can support a particular policy reform; and ii) create new opportunities for policy research and reform in which government will be interested.

Bangladesh Research Network on Inclusive Growth (BRNIG)

BRNIG will help build momentum for increased dialogue and impactful partnerships on inclusive growth by providing a space for a core group of individuals from think tanks and key academic institutions to harness their existing connections with high-level policymakers to effectively share knowledge through formal quarterly workshops, annual events, and half yearly meetings with government officials. In addition, the project's thematic research projects will be conducted by BRNIG members following a tendering and review process. Each project is expected to be completed over a four- to five-month period, with finalized research papers presented at IGPF quarterly meetings and annual meetings.

In addition to individuals from think tanks and academic institutions, EDIG will include researchers from GED in the BRNIG network in recognition of the key role GED plays in developing plans to address Government of Bangladesh social, economic, and political priorities. GED's participation in BRNIG will help connect the Division to a larger network of both national and international researchers to enhance their capacity to conduct and apply research that responds to policymakers' needs. GED personnel will, therefore, play a key role in setting the agenda of IGPF meetings. At the same time, nongovernment BRNIG members will benefit from having government counterparts who have deep understanding of the government's priorities and needs in terms of both research and how it can most effectively be used by policymakers.