



Inspiring Excellence

June - December 2018 ■ Vol. 01 ■ Bi-annual Newsletter

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT WATCH

INSIDE ISSUES

- 02 CPTU AND BIGD SIGN CONTRACT
- 02 INSTITUTIONALIZING AND SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT TENDERERS FORUM
- 03 RCT ON CITIZEN MONITORING BIGD PRESENTS AT CPTU
- 03 INNOVATING MODELS OF CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT
- 03 INCEPTION MEETING BRAC ANNOUNCED AS THE IMPLEMENTING NGO
- 04 PPSC BEING RECONSTITUTED ToR REVISED
- 04 LOOKING BACK AT PILOTING BIGD EXPERIENCES
- 04 HOW CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE EXPERIENCE FROM PILOTING

WIDER CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE OFFING

Digitizing Implementation Monitoring and Public Procurement Project (DIMAPPP), a Government of Bangladesh (GoB) initiative financed by the World Bank, aims to improve public procurement performance and enhance capacity for implementation monitoring of development projects. The project seeks to promote transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public procurement by enabling multi-stakeholder engagement and institutionalizing citizen engagement. The project will be implemented in 48 upazilas across all eight divisions of the country during July 2017-July 2022 period.



BIGD, BRAC University
SK Centre, GP, JA/4, Mohakhali
Dhaka 1212



+88 02 5881 0306, 5881 0326



info@bigd.bracu.ac.bd



http://bigd.bracu.ac.bd

CPTU AND BIGD SIGN CONTRACT

On 24 June 2018, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University and the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) under the Implementation Monitoring & Evaluation Division (IMED) of the Ministry of Planning (MoP) signed the contract for DIMAPPP. Under this contract, BIGD will be the consultant for the 'Citizen Engagement' component of the project. The Treasurer of BRAC University, Mr. Shib Narayan Kairy, on behalf of BIGD, signed the contract with the Director General of CPTU, Md. Faruque Hossain. The ceremony was held at the CPTU office at the Ministry of Planning.

Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman, Professorial Fellow of BIGD, congratulated everyone involved in the project. He stated that Public Procurement Reform Project (PPRP) was a worthy initiative of the government to improve the procurement practice of the country. He said, with the lessons learned from piloting the 'Citizen Engagement' part of PPRP, BIGD will be able to implement DIMAPPP more efficiently. Effective cooperation between CPTU and BIGD will instrumental in the successful completion of DIMAPPP, he added.

Marking the shift of corruption in public procurement from the processing to implementation, the Director General of CPTU, Md. Faruque Hossain asserted that building awareness and emphasizing on moral values can exterminate corruption from society, which is why the government and CPTU sought to engage the citizen in monitoring public procurement. He expressed his hope that BIGD will be able to navigate the sensitive area of 'citizen engagement' wisely and implement DIMAPPP successfully.

Congratulating both the teams, S. N. Kairy, Treasurer of BRAC University, assured that BRAC University will extend its full support in the implementation of the project. Dr. Mirza M Hassan, Adjunct Fellow of BIGD, pointed out the complexities of the project. As DIMAPPP spans throughout the country and engages more agencies than before, the cooperation from the government becomes more crucial for its successful implementation. Mosta Gausul Hoque, the Project Consultant, informed the audiences about the use of latest technology in monitoring the project. The Director of CPTU, Shish Haider Chowdhury emphasized the need for involving more stakeholders in public procurement. All the speakers hoped for cordial cooperation for the successful execution of the project.

INSTITUTIONALIZING AND SUSTAINING GOVERNMENT TENDERERS' FORUM



Bangladesh Center for Communications Programmes (BCCP) organized "Workshop on Institutionalizing Government Tenderers Forum (GTF)" on 22 November 2018 to make the platform more sustainable. The workshop presented GTF's existing areas of work, and received stakeholders' suggestions about making it more sustainable at the district level. The chief guest of the workshop was Mr. Md. Mofizul Islam, Secretary of IMED. The special guest was Mr. Md. Faruque Hossain, Director General of CPTU. Among 80 guests, Mr. Shish Haider Chowdhury, Director, CPTU; Mr. Zafrul Islam, Lead Procurement Specialist, World Bank; Mr. Ali Nur, Additional Chief Engineer, LGED were also present.

In the workshop, guests noted that as 50% tenders are currently processed through e-GP. The guests opined that it is crucial to establish a good relationship between tenderer and procuring entities to ensure the best utilization of fund in public procurement. The district level GTFs will work for creating a space for conversation between these two entities to maintain a transparent procuring environment. Guests further emphasized the need for institutionalizing GTFs to strengthen the public procurement system.

The workshop ended with theme song and advertisement of e-GP. Ms. Khadiza Bilkis, Senior Deputy Director of BCCP, presented the institutionalization process of GTF after which discussion session took place.





RCT ON CITIZEN MONITORING

BIGD PRESENTS AT CPTU

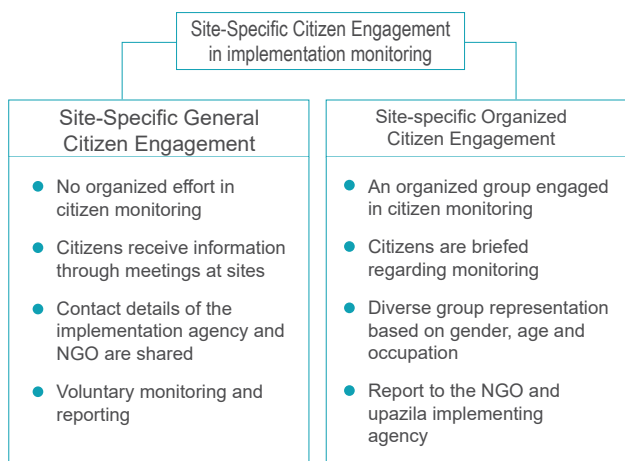
On 12 December 2018, Dr. Munshi Sulaiman, Senior Research Fellow & Head of the Economic Growth Cluster at BIGD, presented the design for a Randomised Control Trial (RCT), which will be used to measure the impact of citizen engagement on the outcome of public procurement projects.

The meeting was chaired by the Director General of CPTU, Md. Faruque Hossain. Dr. Imran Matin, Executive Director of BIGD was also present at the event along with Mr. Shish Haider Chowdhury, Director, CPTU; Mr. Md. Shamimul Haque, Director (Planning), CPTU; Mr. Zafrul Islam, Lead Procurement Specialist, World Bank; Ms. Khadija Bilkis, Senior Deputy Director of Bangladesh Centre for Communications Programme (BCCP).

INNOVATING MODELS OF CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

BIGD, with the partners, will scale up citizen engagement in public procurement using a sustainable, low cost, and politically feasible strategy. Based on the lessons learned from PPRP-II, BIGD will mainly use the Site-Specific Citizen Engagement (SSCE) approach in implementation monitoring. The objective is to ensure quality and reduce corruption by decentralizing the monitoring process.

To better understand the impact, a mix of strategies will be used. In some upazilas, specific citizen groups will be responsible for overseeing and reporting the project implementation. This approach is termed as Site-Specific Organized Citizen Engagement (SOCE). Local community members living in the project area will also be encouraged to join the process. On the other hand, in Site-Specific General Citizen Engagement (SGCE) approach, the participation is entirely voluntary.



In the first year, BIGD will implement SOCE approach in 12 upazilas and SGCE based approach in 4 upazilas. Based on the learning, design for the second and third year will be proposed.

INCEPTION MEETING BRAC ANNOUNCED AS THE IMPLEMENTING NGO

A meeting on the inception report and implementation plan of BIGD was held at CPTU on 31 July 2018. Md. Faruque Hossain, Director General of CPTU, chaired the meeting while CPTU, World Bank, and BIGD officials were present there.

In the meeting participants decided that BRAC's Community Empowerment Program (CEP) will be implementing the project. BIGD took the responsibility of orienting CEP about citizen monitoring in public procurement. Both BIGD and CEP will be responsible for implementing SSCE activities at the local level. CEP worked extensively with local governments to equip them with accountability tools and thus has both expertise and reach in every district and upazila. In the meeting participants also set criteria for district and upazila selection. World Bank representative suggested including textbook and medicine distribution monitoring in the project; they requested CEP to initiate discussion with the concerned departments accordingly regarding the suggestion.

PPSC BEING RECONSTITUTED ToR REVISED

Public Private Stakeholder Committee (PPSC) is a policy guiding forum for all stakeholders, where they discuss implementation of public procurement policies and suggest possible recommendations. The aim is to raise the quality and standard of public procurement vis-à-vis service delivery through accountable and efficient use of public resources. The PPSC will also be responsible for overall monitoring and reviewing of the procurement rules and track the initiatives taken under the Citizen Engagement component of DIMAPPP project.

BIGD is currently revising the ToR of PPSC in consultation with CPTU and World Bank. The aim is to organize the meeting in such a way so that critical information, field experiences and practical insights can be garnered from relevant and well-informed stakeholders efficiently while maintaining a flexible and relatively informal setting.

To realize this objective, the new design will include field level government agency officials involved in public procurement work who will share their insights and lessons. The findings will be presented to relevant policy level actors in future session.

LOOKING BACK AT PILOTING BIGD EXPERIENCES

During January-November 2016, BIGD had successfully piloted the DIMAPPP project. The piloting strategy included establishing citizen committees, complimented by local community mobilization, near project sites. The study sites included Rangpur (Sadar and Mithapukur upazila) and Sirajganj (Sadar and Belkuchi upazila). BIGD piloting was exclusively at the implementation stage, i.e. construction and maintenance, of the procurement process. BIGD, with support from its partner NGOs, ESDO (Rangpur) and ASOD (Sirajganj), organized rigorous training workshops for the citizen committees before the monitoring exercises commenced. Furthermore, extensive awareness campaigns by local LGED officials and the Citizen Committees ensured the local community engagement.

The experiences from the pilot project shed light on both the successes and the remaining challenges, as depicted in the following case study. While the stories in the case study demonstrate the accomplishments of the citizen engagement strategy in the piloting exercise, they also reveal the challenges to address for further improvement in the process of citizen engagement in public procurement.

HOW CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Experience from Piloting

The 130 meters long Shaluabhita road construction commenced in early April, 2016. In the initial stage of piloting, we noticed a lack of trust: the local community assumed that the Citizen Committee might be driven by interests of certain factions of the community and may not act on behalf of the community.

However, from the very beginning, Citizen Committee members and the local community members were unanimous in expressing concerns about the construction quality. During the first visit, Citizens' Committee found construction materials were to be of lower quality than the specifications mentioned. The Citizen Committee pointed out this issue. However, as bigger brick chips were unavailable, the contractors had to compromise and use a larger number of the smaller chips.

More issues arose during the construction of the base. The contractors were using lower number of rods than what was specified. Citizen Committee's persistent objections made the reluctant contractors to comply.

Later on, a conflict ensued between local community members and the contractors as inspection by the former revealed many irregularities that compromised the quality of work. Some examples are: improper mixture of sand and cement for the casting of the road, filling the road bed with poor quality brick chips, and preferential use of better quality brick chips on certain portion to please the local influential individuals. At one point, the construction work was halted due to physical altercation between local community and the contractors. An intervention by the local LGED engineer finally brought an end to this conflict.

Following the conflict, the local community selected a monitor to be stationed at the project site. They did so to prevent the contractors from using construction materials of lower quality. The contractors also agreed to discharge the laborers who got into physical altercations with the local community. They also promised to replace the lower-quality materials with the standard ones.

