

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Planning Commission
General Economics Division (GED)

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the NSSS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Committee

- Date and Time : 10 April 2019, 2.00-4.30 PM
- Venue : Conference Room, General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
- Chairperson : Dr Shamsul Alam, Member (Senior Secretary),
General Economics Division (GED), Bangladesh Planning Commission
- Participants : Appendix 'A'

The chairperson inaugurated the meeting with a note of heartiest welcome to the participants. Enquired by the Chair, the National Project Manager of the SSPS Programme informed that the main agenda of the meeting was to share and discuss findings of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) Mid-term Review (MTR) as contracted out to Policy Research Institute (PRI) of Bangladesh. The chair requested the representative of PRI to make presentations on the findings of the NSSS midterm review. He also requested the members of the committee to actively take part in the discussion, ask relevant questions for clarification, and make suggestions for improvement. Afterwards, Dr. M.A. Razzaque, Research Director, PRI Bangladesh presented the results of the NSSS midterm evaluation, which covered the following areas:

- NSSS MTR has been generally more qualitative in nature as supported by information from the Finance Division, and macro-level indicators from the HIES 2016.
- The MTR covered the socio-economic development status in Bangladesh, comparative analysis on poverty headcount ratio, income share of population in poverty, poverty incidence by districts, comparative analysis on social security expenditure, programme coverage, beneficiaries targeting, and exclusion and inclusion errors by district etc. MTR also provides two simulated scenarios: 1) what will happen in poverty rate if inclusion error is eliminated; and 2) what will happen to the poverty rate if saved resources are distributed amongst the households by Tk. 500 each.
- MTR covers the situation of disability and gender issues embedded in the NSSS. He said that the life cycle based approach in disability was an outstanding inclusion in NSSS, however, there exists a lack of clarity in the NSSS in defining disability.
- On gender-related social security issues in National Social Security Strategy, NSSS Action Plan, NSSS Gender Policy and NSSS Gender Action Plan (draft), the MTR found that NSSS

Gender Policy was a very comprehensive and well-formulated document, but its successes always challenged by enhancing labour force participation. Moreover, lack of gender-disaggregated data is a major obstacle in identifying the gaps in implementation, gender-specific performance evaluation of programmes and informed policy-making efforts.

- MTR emphasized on establishing a single registry management information system (MIS) and there existed lagging in establishing National Household Database (NHD). Budgetary MIS of Social Protection Budget Management Unit (SPBMU) under the Finance Division was almost on track. He raised a concern about integrated MISs Pilot programme within Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) which was yet to be initiated.
- Strengthening government to person (G2P) payment has shown progress. Review of current payment system has been completed, digital payment architecture designed, pilot programmes conducted, and rolling out of all cash program using G2P has been progressing partially.
- On the strengthening process for selecting recipients of social security schemes, the objective was to minimize inclusion error and already some development has been observed, in this regard. The same could be said about exclusion error.
- NSSS M&E Committee headed by Member (Senior Secretary), GED has been formed and functioning effectively. The Business Case Template for the review of social protection schemes and consolidation of small programmes has been drafted; a study is underway in this regard. However, this strengthening process is dependent on developing a PMT Score which is contingent on the successful completion of BBS's NHD (National Household Database).
- A study was commissioned to design the mechanism and initiate implementation of the Grievance Redress System (GRS). Second generation GRS software has been developed and the internalization process is progressing within the Cabinet Division. The awareness through public meetings will help in demand generation and make it more participatory.
- Results-based M&E Framework of the NSSS has been developed and approved by the CMC (Central Management Committee). Impact evaluation for a few social security programmes are currently progressing, however, a mechanism needs to be in place for conducting impact evaluation for each individual social security programme.
- On reform part, MTR shed light on major reforms in NSSS: among the programmatic reforms, 7 reforms, 80 activities and 86 performance indicators were assessed; and among the institutional reforms, 6 reforms, 50 activities and 50 performance indicators were assessed. MTR found a good progress had been achieved, although many more reform processes were lagging behind, particularly, with regards to the active role of NSSS thematic clusters, and programme consolidation, particularly large schemes, which were very difficult to harmonize, rather study showed that many small programmes were terminated due to completion of their tenure.
- On recommendation part, the MTR highlighted several key areas in its preliminary findings: programme consolidation needed a serious rethinking; coordination was always

a challenging tasks, and NSSS thematic cluster coordination was a crucial step of NSSS programme reforms, where the Cabinet Division might think alternate measures for conducting NSSS thematic clusters meetings. There was lack of capacity on IT/MIS and emphasis should be given into it. The processes for selecting recipients of Social Security Schemes and Social Security System for the Urban Poor are required for better performance. Institutional memory should be retained by establishing NSSS desk at cluster lead ministries. The ministries might adopt a comprehensive and coherent MIS strategy and create public awareness for effective operationalisation of the GRS. Gender focus in the NSSS implementation might be sensitized. There should have been a guideline for M&E indicators for effective implementation of the M&E framework. Moreover, there were need for building an overall awareness about the NSSS and documenting the progress made at the ministry/department-level. Furthermore enhanced engagement of GED and Cabinet Division in sensitising and promoting NSSS goals and time-bound responsibilities might be crucial. Finally, embracing a participatory approach for NSSS implementation, engagement with development partners, making concrete progress on major/flagship programmes, establishing a high-level implementation task force (if necessary) for overseeing and strengthening and steering reforms and implementation was needed.

2. Discussions

The members of the NSSS M&E Committee participated in the discussion process, and the members felt to address the following issues in the MTR:

- Re-investigate social protection programmes contribution to poverty, inequality (income and wealth) and poverty gap based on NSSS, and HIES data 2010, and 2016 in the context of MTR's finding that the impact is not so high.
- Primary school stipend has been recently included in urban primary schools into their stipend programme in line with NSSS. It has increased the number of beneficiaries from 70 lakhs to 1 crore and 43 lakhs.
- Ministry of social welfare has already conducted a nationwide study at household level in order to identify and count national-level statistics on persons with disabilities. He mentioned that study is an accurate one and would be continued in the future. The name of the survey was "Disability Detection Survey".
- NSSS has the provision to address both disability and old age allowance. There is provision for extra allowance for very old (more than 90 years old) people.
- CMC-led cluster coordination meetings decreased since 2018. Alternatively, NSSS thematic clusters meetings may be organised under Secretary, Coordination and Reforms of the Cabinet Division.
- PMT depends on the successful completion of BBS's NHD, and NHD's data migration process has already started and will be completed by May 2019. BBS will have PMT training workshop soon with the support of the World Bank.


①

- Finance Division has already included 9 programmes of 6 ministries for using G2P transfer and leftover is planned to be finished by December 2020. The consultant may refer to the names of the programmes in the MTR report.
- About establishing a Complaint and Grievance Redress System (GRS), a situation analysis on the online platform system was conducted in 2016, and it was found that only 6 ministries received complaints from the public and those are not addressed.
- IMED has difficulties in monitoring the programmes, it is heavily loaded with work and doesn't have enough time to visit the field regularly. Nevertheless, impact evaluations of a few programmes were in progress.
- The scoring of some of the indicators under MTR might be re-investigated. Also, a handbook on NSSS M&E indicators was required to clarify the indicators for all ministries.
- On consolidating large programmes, NSSS suggested merging two large programmes, such as, VGD and VGF. However, concerns had been raised on managing programmes if they were consolidated and the implementation process might be challenging.
- There were continuous debates on the types and nomenclature of programmes run by the ministries. Many a time, ministries were less interested to declare a programme non-social protection in type considering the broader perspective of social protection as well as political decisions.
- In many cases, the development partners finance directly through NGOs. The Ministry of Finance doesn't have any control over that fund. Even though NGO's are working in social protection system, highlight should be on the programmes included in the government budget.
- About the gender-related programmes, some programmes deal exclusively with the women. This was one of the strengths of gender-based social security programme. Also, in many programmes, there was conditionality that a certain percentage of beneficiaries should be women.

3. Decisions

- a) The consultants might be requested to submit the draft report within due time.
- b) The recommendations made in the meeting might be taken into consideration to enrich the report.

4. There being no other issues for discussion, the meeting was concluded with the vote of thanks from the Chair.



(Dr. Shamsul Alam)
Member (Senior Secretary)
General Economics Divisions (GED)
Bangladesh Planning Commission

Appendix "A"

SL	Participants	Designation	Organization	Contact Info
1.	Dr. Shamsul Alam	Member, Senior Secretary	GED	
2.	Md. Azizul Alam	Additional Secretary	Finance Division	01712172170
3.	Mahmuda Akter	Additional Secretary	SID	01715430434
4.	Hamin Lasib	Senior Research Associates	PRI	01717586393
5.	Dr. Md. Mashiur Rahman	Director General	IMED	01517261679
6.	Kabir Uddin Ahmed	Director	BBS	01711022630
7.	Mahtab Uddin	Lecturer	University of Dhaka	01850358208
8.	Jillur Rahman	Lecturer	Jagannath University	01520102939
9.	Md Abdul Karim	Additional Secretary	MoWCA	01715421704 Karim.md.100@gmail.com
10.	Mohd. Monirul Islam	Deputy Secretary	PMO	monirulislam.71@gmail.com 01711464513
11.	Mohammad Shahidul Islam	Deputy Secretary	Cabinet Division	01815461772 Shahidul2422@gmail.com
12.	Sheikh Moinul Islam Moin	SAC	GED	01911586851 Sheikh.moinul.moin@gmail.com
13.	Mohammad Khaled Hasan	(Deputy Secretary) Social	UNDP	khaled.hasan@undp.org 01787687030

		Protection Specialist		
14.	Aminul Arifeen	Project Manager	UNDP	aminul.arifeen@undp.org 01787687034
15.	Md. Mahbubul Alam Siddique	Senior Assistant Chief	GED	mahbubul.25eco@gmail.com 01718271078
16.	Mohammad Asaduzzaman Sarker	Senior Asst. Chief	GED	019114990
17.	Daniel Winstanley		UNDP	01705407586 Daniel.winstanley@undp.org
18.	SM Siam	Finance Associates	UNDP	01675513430 Sm.siam@undp.org
19.	Farhana Noor	M&E Officer	UNDP	farhana.noor@undp.org 01713012481

W