

**Knowledge for Development Management (K4DM) Project of ERD
Minutes of Workshop on Validation of the Project Document of K4DM Project Phase-II**

Chief Guest: Ms. Fatima Yasmin, Secretary, Economic Relations Division

Chair: Dr. Nahid Rashid, Additional Secretary, Wing Chief (UN), ERD and National Project Director, K4DM Project.

Co-Chair: Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Van, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP

Meeting Date: 15th November 2020

Time : 11:00 AM till 01:00 PM

Venue: NEC-2 Conference Room, ERD and Zoom Meeting Software.

A list of the participants who attended the workshop is attached here in Annex 1.

A Validation Workshop was held on Knowledge for Development Management (K4DM) phase II on 15th November 2020 at NEC-2 of ERD. Ms. Fatima Yasmin, Honorable Secretary of Economic Relations Division (ERD) was remain present as the Chief Guest and Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Van, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh, was the Special Guest of the workshop. Mr. Rabbi Miah, Joint Secretary (UN-II) presented the significant accomplishments of the K4DM Phase-I and the proposed program of the K4DM phase-II in a comprehensive manner. In the plenary, participants from different Ministries, ERD and UNDP provided in-depth inputs and feedback on the proposed project document. Dr. Nahid Rashid, Additional Secretary, Wing Chief (UN) & National Project Director of K4DM moderated the question and answer session. Significant comments and feedback were given by the participants which will add value to the Project document. At the end, vote of thanks was offered by the Joint Secretary (UN-I) of ERD and the Deputy Project Director of K4DM Project, Mr. Amal Krishna Mandal.

First Session: Speech by the distinguished guests

The Validation Workshop on Project Document of K4DM Phase-II was commenced by the National Project Manager of K4DM, Ms. Marina Shawkat Ali with the kind permission of the Chief Guest. With a short description of the objective of the workshop, Ms. Ali invited the Additional Secretary and Wing Chief (UN) of Economic Relations Division and the National Project Director of K4DM Project, Dr. Nahid Rashid to deliver her Welcoming Speech; Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Van, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh, the Special Guest of the workshop and Ms. Fatima Yasmin, Secretary, ERD and the Chief Guest of the workshop for their speeches.

Welcome Speech by the National Project Director of K4DM Project:

In her welcoming speech, Dr. Nahid Rashid expressed her gratitude to be privileged and honored to welcome everyone to the validation workshop of the phase-II of K4DM Project. She described the importance of leveraging knowledge management to advance Bangladesh towards LDC graduation and to achieve sustainable economic growth. She acknowledged the contribution of the K4DM Project to ERD in its current phase. She added, K4DM Project has brought forth many tangible and intangible achievements since its inception till 2020 – especially in the areas of enhancing the skills of government officials, formulation of NHDR, the establishment of ERDPEDIA, engaging NRBS in the country’s development process and South-South and Triangular Cooperation. She stated that “K4DM project has the potentiality to be sustainable as ERD owns some of the outcomes of the project.” She was hopeful that the Project would continue and upscale the activities already initiated as well as to create a broader range of program activities by engaging the ERD, in phase-II. She concluded her speech with a wish for active participation and insightful inputs from the participants.

Speech by the Special Guest Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Van, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh:

Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Van, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Bangladesh as the Special Guest of the workshop started her speech with sincere gratitude to ERD leadership for being an important strategic partner of UNDP in the endeavours towards development pathways of Bangladesh. She articulated that UNDP Bangladesh emphasises on developing strategic relationship and collaboration between UNDP and the policymakers, and always encourage, appreciate and uphold the endeavour of development implementation by the Government, as K4DM Project is being implemented by the UN Wing of the ERD. In strengthening this collaboration and achieving sustainable results, the ERD leadership will extend further support and continue to play a significant role, jointly with UNDP Bangladesh, in mobilizing resources for the K4DM Phase-II. Ms. Nguyen expressed her sincere gratitude toward the K4DM project team headed by the UN Wing Chief and the National Project Director, and other ERD and GOB officials for the successful implementation of the K4DM Phase-I, and also for developing the Phase-II based on the lessons learned and results achieved. She concluded her speech by thanking the Honorable Secretary of ERD and remarked that she is looking forward to working together for the early initiation of the K4DM phase-II as soon as the current phase ends.

Speech by the Chief Guest, Ms. Fatima Yasmin, Secretary, ERD:

The Secretary of ERD and the Chief Guest of the Workshop, Ms. Fatima Yasmin initiated delivering her inaugural speech by thanking the participants including the Special Guest Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Van and her team for participating in the validation workshop. She agreed with Ms. Nguyen that ERD's primary responsibility is to mobilize external resources and effectively utilize these resources for the implementation of development projects. She highlighted the role of ERD in foreign assistance management and support in the performance of the national development strategies; she emphasized strengthening relationships with development partners to attain national development goals as well as SDGs. The Secretary of ERD added that Bangladesh is in the growth trajectory and need more resources than the other countries as it is implementing a wide range of transformational projects in different sectors like Ruppur power plants, Metro Rail, SDG-related projects encompassing education, environment, health and social safety net, where some of those are supported by the development partners. The country has completed the implementation of the 7th five-year plan and will formally launch the 8th five-year plan soon to have a planned development in all sectors. She then stated the milestones to achieve ahead to have a tri-annual review for getting out of the LDC status by February 2021, to start as a non-LDC country from 2024, and then to achieve SDGs by 2030 and to become an upper-middle-income country by 2031. The long-term aspiration is to become a developed country in 2041 to fulfil the dreams of the Father of the Nation to make a poverty-free Bangladesh under the visionary leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. She then stated that the ERD is working together with the development partners in mobilizing resources to achieve all these aspirations and targets. She strongly mentioned that despite the ongoing toll on the economy and human lives amid COVID-19 crisis, Bangladesh is managing the situation of economic recovery quite well than other countries. She emphasized that *"We need to be innovative and be able to adjust to a changing environment, like COVID-19 situation"*.

The Secretary acknowledged and thanked the K4DM Project and UNDP for their role in enhancing the capacity of the Government officials and the institutions to enable themselves to deliver services, fulfilling the responsibilities more efficiently and effectively, and to make informed

decision making. She expressed her expectation that K4DM phase-II will add more value to ERD in managing foreign assistance mobilization by applying the innovative mode of financing e.g., NRB engagement and modality of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and support the implementation of the national development strategies through strengthening relationships with the development partners. She appreciated that the Project Document of K4DM Phase-II has developed based on the lessons learned from the Phase-I. There is still scope for further discussion on how to improve the Project Document and how to include the priority actions to help ERD, other relevant ministries and divisions of the Government. Finally, the Secretary thanked UNDP once again for their support to ERD through K4DM and other projects as well and expressed her best wishes to strengthen the ongoing partnership between UNDP and ERD through the K4DM phase-II.

Second Session: Presentation on achievements of K4DM phase-I and program framework of K4DM phase-II

After inauguration by the Chief Guest, the facilitator of the workshop Ms. Marina Ali invited Mr. Rabbi Miah, Joint Secretary of ERD (UN-II) to make the Power Point presentation on the achievements of K4DM Project Phase-I and the proposed program framework of the K4DM Project Phase-II. Mr. Rabbi Mia presented the major achievements of K4DM Phase-I and their contribution to ERD.

Mr Rabbi initiated his presentation by saying that K4DM Phase-I has been a successful joint initiative between the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and UNDP since January 2015. It has been providing technical support in formulating National Human Development Report; promoted South-South Triangular Cooperation to promote national development; enhanced decision-making, negotiation, leadership, planning and management, English language and using ERDPEDIA skills among the government officials. Moreover, the Project provided training on 20 different issues to 650 GOB officials of ERD and other line ministries. K4DM Supported ERD with four Policy Papers on four thematic areas by forming an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) consisting of Civil Society, Academia and retired GOB policymakers. Different studies have been conducted by the Project on Resource Mobilization, NRB and SSTC issues; leveraged skills and know-how of non-resident Bangladeshi's (NRBs) and provided technical support to make NRB and SS&TC cell function within the ERD UN Wing. All these achievements have contributed by strengthening the strategic relationship among UNDP, ERD and other line ministries in attaining better results to achieve national priorities towards achieving SDG Goals and the 5-year national development plans.

Next, Mr. Rabbi Mia elaborated the background, context and objective of K4DM phase-II which will mainly focus on the country's current progress towards LDC graduation through smooth persuasion of sustainable and inclusive growth in the remaining years. However, the COVID-19 has changed the national and international context and threatens to derail this trajectory. Considering the context, K4DM phase-II has been developed to address two specific issues to counter the development challenges including: (i) how to minimize the capacity gaps in the ERD and relevant stakeholders for enhancing their ability to undertake evidence-based decision-making and engage effectively with the international arena for promoting national development interests; and (ii) how to mobilize maximum external economic resources by exploring multiple sources of funding and create a dynamic partnership among government agencies, development partners and civil society.

As the situation is very challenging, K4DM Phase-II needs to focus on strengthening the skills and capacity of the ERD and relevant GOB officials in developing evidence-based decisions through

appropriate knowledge management. It will also provide technical, policy and logistic support to the ERD and other line Ministries as per their needs. K4DM phase-II will support strengthening effective partnerships with the development partners and other countries through effective collaboration, both nationally and internationally, applying multiple approaches for maximizing external resource mobilization. Therefore, to achieve a lasting impact as to that enable the GOB to accelerate resource mobilization towards LDC graduation, K4DM phase-II will create an impact through attaining two outcomes:

- I. Evidence-based policymaking towards national development aspirations;
- II. Strengthening the external resource mobilization strategy and economic collaboration.

K4DM phase-II has five outputs and under each output, there are numerous activities that will produce the above two outcomes. The intended cost for the K4DM is USD 4,500,000/ BDT 381,600,000, where the program cost is 68%, staff cost is 21% and operation cost is 11%. It is worth mentioning that K4DM phase-I has already initiated mobilization of resources for the phase-II and received a small grant amounting USD 28,000 from UNDP Seoul Policy Center of the Republic of Korea which forms the 1% of the total budget. The GOB will contribute the 3% of the total budget and UNDP will provide the remaining budget. The rest of the amount will also be mobilized from other development partners jointly by UNDP and ERD.

Third Session: Feedback on the Presentation

After the presentation on Project Document, the Joint Secretary, Chief Guest of the workshop thanked Mr Rabbi for his excellent presentation and she also thanked those involved in designing the Project Document (ProDoc). She invited the participants to provide their comments and suggested having another round of discussion for finalizing the ProDoc.

The facilitator Ms. Marina Ali then invited the participants to come up with their valuable inputs to help further development of the ProDoc. The Additional Secretary, Wing Chief (UN) and National Project Director of the K4DM Project, Dr. Nahid Rashid responded to the queries and questions from the participants and assured that the comments would be incorporated in the ProDoc accordingly.

Comments and feedback:

➤ Farida Yasmin, Director, MEA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Ms. Farida Yasmin began her annotations by expressing that the idea of this Validation Workshop is very timely, pertinent and suggested for terming the ProDoc as a living document. She also expressed her concerns on the challenges following LDC graduation and called for strong collaboration among all stakeholders. She suggested to include the MOFA in the official capacity building program in the 2nd phase. Ms. Yasmin added that IT based training and data-based modules should be incorporated in the training programs for capacity building of the GOB officials. She suggested for the inclusion of the Foreign Service Academy to collaborate with other training institutes such as BPATC, PDA, IPFB, and BIGM and emphasized on more research-based training as well.

She suggested to conduct training on the courses of multilateralism, economic and development diplomacy and urged to collaborate with the foreign missions abroad. The issue of engaging retired ambassadors in the PEP was also suggested from her side. A suggestion on customizing the NRB questionnaire through consulting consultation of the corresponding foreign missions was also there.

Thanking Ms. Yasmin, the NPD of K4DM mentioned that the ongoing phase has so far worked in partnership with number of Ministries and Divisions including MOFA. Yet, in the phase-II,

further scope of work with a maximum number of Ministries will be done. Inclusion of the retired Ambassadors is a great idea which will be taken care of in the K4DM phase-II and partnership and collaboration with MOFA will be strengthened in NRB engagement and SS&TC issues.

➤ **Nusrat Noman, Deputy Chief, Agricultural, Industry & Co-ordination Wing, Planning Commission:**

She suggested for changing the title which should be more 'smart' and 'specific'. She further added that, as specified in the output II, the idea to publish the NHDR in every alternative year may be too ambitious. Therefore, she advised to revisit the target of publishing NHDR.

In output III which says "external resource mobilization strategy expert team/task force", she suggested to include representatives from other line ministries. She appreciated the idea of creating the position of liaison officer in Phase II of the project.

The NPD thanked Ms. Noman for her suggestion and assured that phase-II would take care of these, especially on the periodic publication of the NHDR issue.

➤ **Kawshar Jahan, Deputy Secretary, Economic Relations Division:**

Ms. Jahan thanked the K4DM team's initiative to come up with a well designed ProDoc. However, she pointed to the issue of specifying a timeline for the indicators mentioned in the ProDoc. He advocated making it more time-bound in the next phase. A well-planned timeline will help achieving the targets on time.

She suggested to focus on the indicator to determine the resources we want to mobilize through both the NRBs and SSTC. She appreciated the concept of the E-centre and suggested for an initiative to organize training for new officials to learn about using the E-centre platform. Moreover, management training also be there for Admin Cadre Officers. Finally, she highlighted the importance of training on the analysis of the foreign assistance and techniques of negotiation since the foreign assistance management will become more delicate soon after the LDC graduation.

The NPD assured about incorporating the ideas and mentioned that the term 'aid' needs to be termed as 'assistance' and 'Donors' as 'development partners'.

➤ **Munir Hossain, Programme Finance Analyst, UNDP Bangladesh:**

First, he mentioned that one of the challenges for government officials is to make evidence-based policies and evidence-based knowledge management where data forms a vital element to work with, therefore, BBS can be a partner of the K4DM project to use their data. He came up with a suggestion to develop an adaption strategy with the new normal situation in the financial management system. It is important for ERD to implement this as ERD is dealing with the financial management process with the Finance Division. He also added that day-to-day works of ERD have been virtualized in the COVID-19 context and therefore, the officials need to be trained to use web-based and software-based alternative medium of work.

The NPD agreed upon the issue to be addressed in the next phase.

➤ **Mohammed Nazim Uddin, Former Joint Secretary of ERD (UN-II):**

He mentioned that the K4DM Project phase-I has effectively been implemented, especially in the areas of establishing ERDPEDIA, developing the NHDR and developing the capacity of GOB Officials. He expected that K4DM Phase-II is expected to contribute more to strengthen ERD to achieve more tangible results. As the former Deputy Project Director of this Project, Mr. Nazim advised to avoid delay in commencing the second phase.

The NPD thanked Mr. Mohammed Nazim Uddin for his contribution to Phase-I of the project.

➤ **A.K.M Dinarul Islam, Additional Secretary and Wing Chief, Coordination and NORDIC Wing, ERD:**

He found this workshop a very thought-provoking and mentioned that the issue of NRB database is very challenging.

The NPD thanked Mr. Islam for his remarks and assured about working in a more coordinated way in the next phase of the project.

Decisions:

- Project Document of K4DM project phase II shall be validated subject to incorporating the comments and feedback received in the workshop.
- ERD shall finalize the Project Document and initiate Phase II immediately upon the completion of Phase-I.

Finally, Mr. Amal Krishna Mandal, Joint Secretary (UN-I) and the Deputy Project Director of the K4DM project, thanked the Chief Guest, Special Guest and all participants from ERD, other ministries and UNDP for their participation and valuable contribution to the workshop. He expressed profound gratitude to the Honorable Secretary of ERD for her appreciation and acknowledgement of K4DM achievements. He also thanked Mr. Rabbi Mia, Joint Secretary, ERD (UN-II) for his brilliant presentation. Mr. Mandal thanked the K4DM project team for successfully organizing the workshop. As there was no other issue to discuss, he declared the closing of the workshop with an expectation to receive continuing support from the authorities for the approval of the final ProDoc and initiation of the K4DM project phase-II.



Nguyen Thi Ngoc Van

Deputy Resident Representative
UNDP Bangladesh



Dr. Nahid Rashid

Additional Secretary and Wing Chief (UN)
& National Project Director, K4DM project
Economic Relations Division