

Focus Group Discussion to Finalize the M & E Framework for Implementing the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS)

Organized by the Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP), ERD

Venue: NEC-2 Conference Room, ERD, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
Date: 21 May 2025, 10:00 am, Wednesday

Outcome Document

Economic Relations Division (ERD), with assistance from its Support to Sustainable Graduation Project (SSGP), organized a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to finalize the M&E framework for Implementing the Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) on 20 May 2025 at 10:00 am at the NEC II Conference Room of ERD. Additional Secretary of ERD and the Project Director of SSGP Mr. A. H. M. Jahangir chaired the event. Major discussions and outcomes of the event are documented below.

Welcome Remarks by the Chair- Mr. A. H. M. Jahangir, Additional Secretary & Project Director, SSGP, ERD:

Mr. Jahangir, in his welcome remarks, recalled that United Nations recommend a graduating LDC to prepare a national Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) during the preparatory period in cooperation with its development and trading partners and with targeted assistance from the UN system. He also recalled that Bangladesh had consequently prepared an STS with technical support from UN DESA and SSGP. He noted that the STS had incorporated a time-bound action plan - prioritising and expediting the implementation of necessary reforms to achieve sustainable graduation. He mentioned that chapter V of the STS had outlined the need for a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework based on this Action Matrix to track and coordinate the necessary progress. He further mentioned that SSGP had consequently drafted an M&E Framework which had been shared with the relevant ministries, division and agencies. He also recalled that already a number of agencies had provided their inputs and feedback into the draft M&E framework. In this context, he explained that all the relevant ministries or agencies had been divided into various clusters and a series of cluster-wise Focus Group Discussions are being organized to refine and finalize the M&E Framework through interactive discussions and feedback.

Discussion on Draft Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Frameworks:

At this stage, the draft ministry-wise M&E frameworks from the following ministries/agencies were presented in detail: Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission, Export Promotion Bureau, Ministry of expatriates' welfare and overseas

employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Textiles and Jute, and Ministry of Shipping.

The lead and associate ministries/divisions/agencies provided their feedback on the draft framework. The inputs already received from the concerned ministries were thoroughly discussed. Any concerns or queries were also clarified through interactive discussions. Component Managers of SSGP Dr. Mostafa Abid Khan and Dr. Md. Rezaul Bashar Siddique facilitated the discussions. The Ministry of Textiles and Jute requested to include few actions on development of Jute industry and accordingly it was agreed that Ministry of Textiles and Jute Would send their proposal in agreed format, which will be provided by the SSGP consultant. Based on the feedback and comments coming through the interactive discussions, necessary updates and modification were also suggested.

Conclusion by the Chair – Mr. A. H. M. Jahangir, Additional Secretary & Project Director, SSGP, ERD:

Mr. Jahangir, in his concluding remarks, thanked all the participants for their inputs and feedback. He observed that the focus group discussion had been quite interactive. He also hoped that it would go a long way in clarifying many of the queries regarding the M&E framework. Noting that the government is putting emphasis on timely, effective and coordinated implementation of the STS, he stressed on expediting the finalization of the STS M&E framework. He also requested the concerned ministries and agencies to nominate an STS focal point for regular communication and coordination in this regard. He asked the lead agencies to update and finalize their respective portion of the M&E framework based on the discussions of the event and send it to ERD and SSGP within the next seven working days. He also informed that based on the feedback coming from the relevant ministries or agencies, the M&E framework will be finalized which would be forwarded to the appropriate authority for their approval.

Outcome/ Decisions:

- (1) Ministries and agencies presented in the FGD would send their final M&E frameworks reflecting the discussions after internal consultation within seven days.
- (2) Ministry of Textiles and Jute will prepare a draft action plan and M&E framework focusing on the jute sector and will share it with ERD and SSGP within seven working days.

