

**GOVERNANCE INNOVATION UNIT**  
**CHIEF ADVISER'S OFFICE**

Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) is a think tank of the government under the Chief Adviser's Office of Bangladesh. It was established in 2012 with a view to improving good governance through fostering innovation in the public sector. Innovation in governance introduces new methods for citizen engagement, transparency, and accountability. GIU views innovation as the creation of novel or alternative solutions to challenges in public service delivery, the simplification of service processes, and the efficient and effective advancement of development administration. Moreover, globalization and technological changes influence Bangladesh socially, economically, politically, and culturally. Consequently, the choices and expectations of citizens as service seekers from the government are also evolving day by day. This necessitates rethinking service delivery processes concerning quality, time, and cost. With the slogan 'Putting Citizens First,' GIU is working to meet citizen's expectation in service and to reinvent public sector management. Additionally, GIU focuses on civil service reform and capacity development

**VISION**

Think Tank on Good Governance and Innovation.

**MISSION**

To ensure that the public sector is 'Putting Citizens First' by implementing good governance reforms and innovations that meets or exceeds citizen expectations.

**OBJECTIVES**

**1. Capacity Development:** To infuse the notion of 'putting citizens first' in the work culture of the public sector through orienting civil servants about-

- a. Improving quality of service;
- b. Engaging public servants in service delivery;
- c. Ensuring value for money.

**2. Innovation & Implementation:** To foster an innovative culture across the public sector by-

- a. Encouraging novelty in approaching problems;
- b. Facilitating the implementation of new ideas.

**3. Research:** To conduct research on good governance with a view to assisting government agencies for-

- a. Identifying national and international best practices;
- b. Replicating and scaling up.

**4. Liaison & Outreach:** To partner with private sector, academia, civil society, and international organizations as a public sector think tank in Bangladesh.

### **ACTIVITIES**

Under these broad aims and objectives, the activities of GIU includes Policy reform/Service process Simplification, Capacity Development; and Research. More specifically-

- Improving good governance and public service management through innovation;
- Providing strategic support for institutional capacity building of public administration, public service delivery, and service simplification on the basis of existing institutional knowledge and novel concepts;
- Nurturing good practice, research, information management, and publication regarding modern public administration, citizen's charter, and innovation in service delivery;
- Providing support to identify and implement national priority in development process of Bangladesh;
- Providing support to SDG implementation and SDG localization throughout the country;
- Awareness building on different social problems and policy recommendations in this regard;
- Capacity building of Bangladesh Civil Service for better public service management and public service delivery;
- Collaborating with national and international organizations and Universities on good governance, public service delivery and capacity building, and research;

## ORGANOGRAM

GIU is headed by the Unit Chief. Under the leadership of the unit chief there are a Director General, two Directors, and four Deputy Directors. Unit chief has the functional authority as well as advisory role and controlling authority. Besides, Principal Secretary has the financial and administrative authority; and Principal Coordinator (SDG Affairs) has advisory role regarding SDG Affairs.

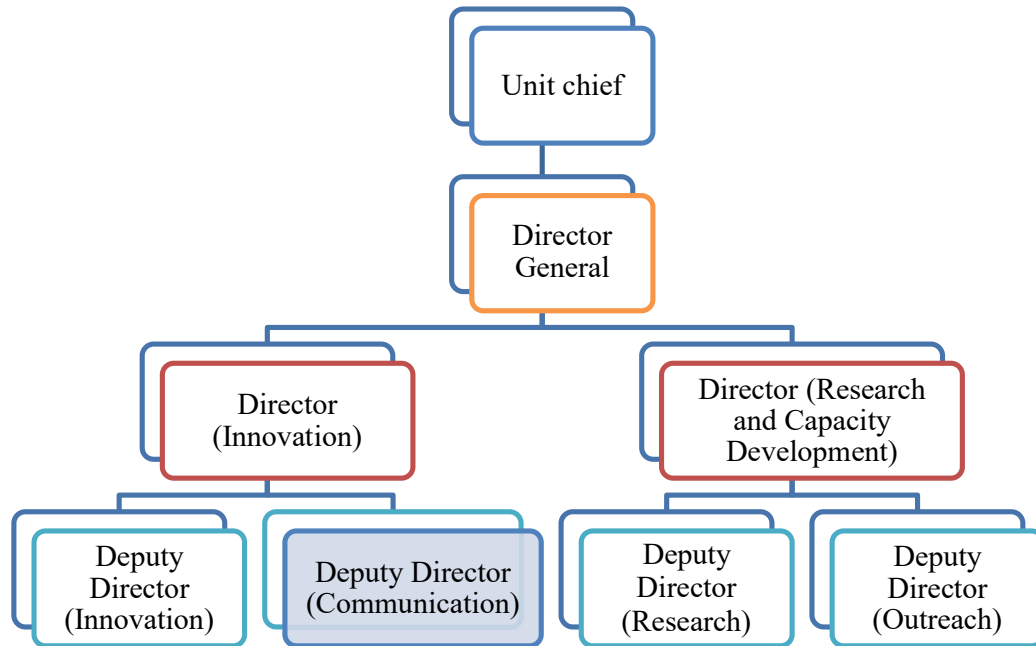


Figure: Organogram of GIU

## COMMITTEES FOR OVERSIGHT

### A. Steering Committee

A 7-member steering committee was formed for policy guidelines. The formation of the committee is as follows:

Honourable Prime Minister	President
Honourable Minister, Ministry of Finance	Member
Honourable Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives	Member
Economics Adviser to HPM	Member
Foreign Affairs Adviser to HPM and Unit Chief (GIU)	Member
State Minister, Ministry of Public Administration	Member

2 Members of Parliament nominated by HPM (1 male and 1 female) Member

### **B. Strategy Committee**

A 7-member strategy committee was formed for strategic assistance and guidelines. The formation of the committee is as follows:

Foreign Affairs Adviser to HPM and Unit Chief (GIU)	President
Cabinet Secretary	Member
Principal Secretary to the HPM	Member
Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration	Member
Secretary, Finance Division	Member
Secretary, Prime Minister's Office	Member
Secretary, Secondary and Higher Education Division	Member
Rector, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre	Member

## **MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Annual Performance Agreement (APA)**

To improve the quality of governance, GIU initiated a paradigm shift in the performance management system by introducing Annual Performance Agreement (APA) in collaboration with Cabinet Division, aiming to create a result-based and accountable public sector. For this noble work, GIU was awarded the Public Administration Award in 2016. Subsequently, the Cabinet Division has taken the responsibility for administering the APA, which has since become an effective tool for organizational performance management in the public sector.

### **Recommending for Introducing Annual Performance Appraisal Report System**

The GIU has recommended the introduction of an Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR) system to replace the Annual Confidential Report for evaluating government employees' performance. GIU has also developed a format for this new evaluation system and sent it along with their recommendations to the Ministry of Public Administration for implementation across the government. The Ministry of Public Administration has now finalized the APAR and is planning to conduct a piloting.

### **Bangladesh Model (39+1) for SDG Localization**

GIU has been working on Sustainable Development (SDG) Localization since 2018 and came up with 39 national indicators and +1 indicators for the 64 districts and 492 upazilas to formulate 'Sustainable Development Goal Localization' Model. GIU also published a book titled 'Sustainable Development Goal Localization: Bangladesh Model' in 2023. The model can be a reference point for other developing countries.

### **Citizen's Charter**

Citizen's Charter is a tool for official commitment to the citizens as to when and how services will be delivered to them. GIU formulated a standardized format of Citizen's Charter for the public sector with the help of the Cabinet Division and the Ministry of Public Administration. Furthermore, nationwide training was conducted to facilitate the implementation of the Citizen's Charter throughout the public sector.

### **Child Marriage**

In line with the global commitment to reduce child marriage, the GIU introduced an innovative strategy aimed at various stakeholders, including marriage solemnizers. They conducted extensive training nationwide to raise awareness among these solemnizers and established a database. This initiative has positively impacted the reduction of child marriage rates. In recognition of this achievement, the GIU received a "Recognition Award" from the Canadian High Commission in Dhaka in 2016.

### **Internship Policy**

GIU proposed the introduction of an internship program designed for high-achieving graduates to acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the public sector. In this regard, a policy has been drafted by GIU and forwarded to the Ministry of Public Administration. Based on the draft, the Ministry of Public Administration introduced the Internship Policy in 2023. The policy offers opportunities for qualified graduates to complete internships in the government, semi-government, and autonomous bodies for a specified period.

### **Health Sector Reform Initiative**

After extensive consultations, GIU has developed three sets of recommendations for key sub-sectors within the Health Sector: Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC), Career

Planning of Health care providers, and procurement. Regarding career planning, the recommendation propose the rationalization of positions for doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers, the development of a dynamic career planning framework for sector personnel, and the establishment of a cluster-based promotion and placement policy. In terms of medical equipment based on bed capacity and implementing maintenance schedules, establishing division-specific maintenance workshops, and designing flexible recruitment policy with appropriate staffing levels. For BMDC, the recommendations suggest updating Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council Act and formulating associated regulations, including disciplinary provisions in the code of conduct, and developing a fair policy on private practice for doctors.

### **Traffic Management:**

The GIU worked to improve traffic flow throughout the country. This initiative aims to reduce traffic congestion in the city. To ease traffic movement in Dhaka City, the GIU helped introduce the U-Loop and collaborated with the two City Corporations of Dhaka and various expert stakeholders. The first U-Loop was successfully introduced at the Jashim Udding point in Uttara

### **Environment Protection:**

The GIU has been working to raise mass awareness about reducing environmental pollution. They identified that open-space animal slaughtering cause pollution, especially during Eid al-Adha when a large number of animals are slaughtered in Bangladesh. The GIU addressed this issue by collaborating with the Local Government Division, City Corporations, Municipalities, and District and Upazila Administrations to promote awareness about the pollution caused by open-space slaughtering and to encourage people to use designated slaughtering areas. This initiative had a very positive effect at that time and is now being managed by the Local Government Division.

### **Simplification of Driving License Service**

Since 2019, GIU has focused on simplifying the process of obtaining a driving license and put forward recommendations concerning written tests, field tests, viva voce examinations, and the issuance of digital licenses with QR codes. Following GIU's suggestions, the driving test process has been simplified, and the issuance of digital licenses with QR codes has been implemented.

### **Simplification of Birth Registration**

To streamline the birth registration process, GIU has proposed several recommendations. These suggestions prompted the office of the Registrar General, Birth and Death Registration to implement significant process improvements, reducing the inconvenience for service seekers. The processes include the introduction of an online payment gateway to deposit the fees, withdrawal of mandatory provision of submitting parents' birth registration certificates for registering children's birth, decentralizing the authority of the central office to local offices for minor corrections, and other similar measures.

### **Research**

#### **STEM based Education**

GIU conducted a study to assess the applicability of the STEM approach in secondary education in Bangladesh. The experimental project aimed to evaluate the STEM-based educational methods and learning materials impact science learning among sixth-grade students, utilizing a mixed-methods research design. The study's results indicate that students in the experimental group achieved higher average scores in science compared to those in the control group. Based on these findings, recommendations will be forwarded to the relevant ministries and divisions.

#### **Evaluation of Prime Minister Fellowship**

Based on the Karpatrik Model of training/education evaluation, a survey has been carried out for primary evaluation of Prime Minister Fellowship program and its effectiveness. A Likert Scaled survey questionnaire was sent to each fellow who completed their master's level program and asked to identify their experiences and skills they already gained according to their perception. The result shows a very positive impact on their skills and confidence development as well as extending their horizon on cultural diversity.

#### **Effectiveness of Citizen Charter**

The GIU helped introduce the Citizen Charter to the government and at the field level. Subsequently, the GIU conducted research on the effectiveness of the Citizen Charter in improving public service delivery at the field level.

### **National Governance Assessment Framework**

GIU is working to formulate a country contextualized “National Governance Assessment Framework” with the financial and technical support of UNDP. With a primary framework, a piloting study was carried out by UNDP with the help of Dhaka University and BBS under the coordination of GIU. GIU identified some weakness in data collection and analysis. Moreover, the findings were found mixed and the government did not go for publication of the findings.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

The GIU helped simplify the pension process for retired government employees by recommending a reduction in the number of required documents and steps for pension approval. Similarly, the GIU assisted in streamlining the confirmation processes and introduced a "Help Desk" or "Front Desk" to assist service seekers in public offices. Additionally, the GIU made recommendations for the digitization of various services at the outset of the digitization initiative.

## **CURRENT INITIATIVES OF GIU**

### **National Governance Assessment Framework (NGAF)**

It is widely acknowledged that good governance is essential for sustainable development. Furthermore, a comprehensive understanding of good governance requires consideration of a country's specific context. Against this backdrop, GIU, in collaboration with national and international partners, has initiated the formulation of a National Governance Assessment Framework. This framework is based on governance indicators relevant to the country's context, aiming to accurately depict the current state of governance.

NGAF is a governance assessment framework tailored to the specific context of Bangladesh. It is designed to support the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in achieving its ambitious Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041. Specifically focused on Sustainable Development Goal 16, NGAF aims to promote an inclusive and peaceful society by ensuring access to justice and fostering effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. This framework will assist the GoB in tracking long-term progress and providing periodic reports to policymakers and citizens, utilizing a set of locally developed national indicators that align with international governance measurement standards.

The objectives of NGAF are (a) To advance evidence-based policy reform agenda for good governance by undertaking a well-rounded multi-stakeholder assessment of the quality of governance in the country. This will include areas of strengths and weaknesses, good practices as well as gaps to help the government to take necessary policy measures. (b) To support the SDG monitoring and reporting responsibilities of the Government, especially on SDG 16.

This indicator framework will support the government to showcase its progress on SDG monitoring as well as achievements. To build broad-based awareness of key governance issues, priorities as well as the reform initiatives already being implemented by the Government and other stakeholders, and to build capacity for more effective monitoring as well as engagement in the SDGs.

The NGAF 1<sup>st</sup> framework comprised of five thematic areas, those are **a) Effectiveness and Capacity, b) Equity and Inclusion, c) Rule of Law, d) Participation and Responsiveness and e) Transparency and Accountability**. With these five thematic areas, **the framework has 18 sub-themes and 64 indicators**. With this first framework, a study was made where data was collected by citizen survey, interviewing government officers and civil society consultations during the period of 2018-22.

The first National Governance Assessment Framework (NGAF) identified opportunities to better contextualize the framework with country-specific indicators and highlighted areas for improvement. Consequently, we decided to revise the framework and began this review process in 2023. We have already produced a draft of the revised NGAF framework in consultation with our working group, the OSLO Governance Centre, and our expert team from Dhaka University.

The draft revised NGAF framework encompasses seven thematic areas: **a) Public Service Delivery, b) Equity and Inclusion, c) Rule of Law, d) Transparency and Accountability, e) Participation, f) Environmental Governance, and g) Economic Governance**. Within these seven thematic areas, there are 24 sub-themes and 83 indicators.

### **Improvement of Service Delivery of Intensive Care Unit**

GIU has taken an initiative to improve the services at the Intensive Care Units (ICU) of public medical college hospitals in Bangladesh and form a team with relevant stakeholders. After

visiting the ICUs of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), the team identified several problems which are hindering the service delivery. The GIU team plans to visit ICUs of several public and private hospitals to propose comprehensive recommendations for ICU. In line with this GIU is also examining the possibility to establish Palliative Care Units at least at the divisional level hospitals. The findings and recommendations will be finalized after organizing a series of seminars with relevant stakeholders.

### **SDG Implementation and its Localization**

GIU has been working with SDG implementation and its localization since the inception of SDG in 2015. Under the leadership of GIU, out of 231 SDG indicators 39 national priority indicators for Bangladesh have been identified and approved by the Cabinet which is still the basis for SDG implementation in Bangladesh. During approving 39 priority indicators, the Cabinet approved a model of SDG Localization as 39+1 Model where 39 represents national level priority and +1 represents one indicator for each Local Level Entity. With this +1-priority indicator, GIU identify 64 priority indicators for 64 districts and 492 priority indicators for 492 upazilas. After series of consultation workshop, GIU finally published a book titled “SDG Localization: Bangladesh Model” by the help of GED, BBS and a2i. Recently GIU organized a seminar on SDG Localization to inform the stakeholders about these findings with different government bodies, development partners, NGOs, and private sectors and to design the way forward. A comprehensive SDG localization mechanism for the whole country has been proposed as well as identify the lead ministries/divisions to implement the priority indicators already been identified.

### **Collaboration with Harvard University, USA:**

Governance Innovation Unit has been working with Harvard University to improve the capacity of Bangladesh Civil Service as per a MoU with the Ash Center for Democratic Governance, Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) since 25 May 2022. The major components of this agreement include institutional capacity building, capacity building of civil servants, and research and collaboration. Program components include:

- ▶ **Institutional Capacity Building**
  - ▶ Faculty Development;
  - ▶ Curriculum Development;
  - ▶ Teaching/Pedagogy Fellowship.

- ▶ **Civil Servant Capacity Development**
  - ▶ Senior management Policy Dialogue;
  - ▶ Executive Education/ Sector Specific Training;
  - ▶ Sector Specific Workshop/Seminar;
- ▶ **Research Collaboration**
  - ▶ Sector Specific Policy Research;
  - ▶ Other Research;
  - ▶ Research Fellowship;

### **Current activities under GIU-HKS MoU**

**Faculty Development:** GIU and HKS collaborate to organize Training of Trainers (ToT) aimed at enhancing knowledge and teaching skills of faculties of public training institutes. Following a selection policy by the Ministry of Public Administration (MoPA), prospective faculties are chosen for this program. In 2023, Harvard University faculty members conducted a two-week training session on Pedagogical ToT for 32 civil service officers at the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC). Another ToT training program has been completed with 29 officers in July 2024.

**Pedagogy fellowship:** Every year 4/5 fellows are expected to participate in a pedagogy fellowship at HKS. From 21 January to 17 February 2024, four participants from the faculty pool participated in the program and are working to develop teaching cases.

**Curriculum Review and Development:** An initiative has been taken to review the Senior Staff Course (SSC) Curriculum at BPATC. A curriculum development team of civil servants has been working on this assignment. The team has already collected data for reviewing and redesigning the competency framework for the SSC Course.

**Executive Training:** Eight (8) civil service officers have been nominated for executive training at HKS: Five (5) on Comparative Tax Policy, and Three (3) on Leadership Decision Making.

**Senior Management Policy Dialogue:** GIU will organize a Senior Management Policy Dialogue on ‘Clean Energy Transition’ in October 2024 for policymakers and stakeholders in

the energy sector. Expert faculty members from Harvard will lead the dialogue, which will include participation from senior policymakers.

**Research:** GIU and HKS have identified five research areas: public policy reform, curriculum institutionalization, solar energy transition, tax system digitization, and macro-economic management. Collaborative research teams comprising faculty members and bureaucrats are currently engaged in studying these topics.

### **Collaboration with Curtin University, Australia:**

To improve the capacity of civil servants who are mainly working with SDG implementation and planning, GIU takes the initiative to training its SDG-related officers from different Ministries and from field level and collaborated with the Curtin University of Australia for the same. Under this collaboration, GIU arranges a training program titled 'Action Research for SDGs Localization in Bangladesh'. The program comprises two parts, one is a two-week training at Curtin University, Australia, and the other is in field action research in Bangladesh. Every group of participants undertakes an action research project in Bangladesh. Through the action research projects, participants learn the real impact of the actions in the field and get wide range of experiences.

### **Prime Minister Fellowship**

The Prime Minister Fellowship was introduced in 2018 to cultivate knowledgeable and skilled human resources capable of addressing emerging challenges. This fellowship supports individuals pursuing Ph.D. and Master Degrees at esteemed foreign universities. Eligibility extends to Bangladesh Civil Service Cadre officers, university teachers, other non-cadre government officers, and graduates from the private sector. GIU manages the fellowship program with oversight from two committees: the Fellowship Steering Committee and the Fellowship Selection Committee. A rigorous two-stage software-based selection process is employed to choose fellows. As of FY2023-24, 116 Ph.D. and 308 Master Degree fellowships have been awarded, of which 26 completed their Ph.D. and 215 earned Master Degrees. For FY2024-25, 50 candidates have been selected for the fellowship, 11 for Ph.D. and 39 for Master Degrees, which is now under a review process. Statistics categories and year wise fellows are given below:

Fiscal Year	Course		Total	Remarks
	Ph.D.	Master Degree		
2018-19	41	68	109	
2019-20	40	103	143	
2020-21	0	0	0	No fellowship due to Covid-19
2021-22	18	65	83	
2022-23	7	35	42	
2023-24	10	37	47	
2024-25	11	39	50	Now is under a review process
	127	347	474	

## FUTURE INITIATIVES

**Civil Service Reform:** Proposing reform for a knowledge-based civil service: To bring in specialization utilizing the existing human resources.

**Research:** Commissioning study to identify the skill gaps of Ministries/ Divisions critical for

**LDC graduation:** To develop an effective capacity development program based on actual need.

**Policy Reform:** Developing a framework of evidence-based policy making for the public sector: To formulate robust and more vibrant public policy based on evidence.

**Market Monitoring:** Designing a real-time market monitoring mechanism for better consumer rights and a competitive market.

**Accountability Framework:** Formulating an accountability framework to improve the transparency and accountability of civil service employees.