Research Issue

Slow Implementation of Development Projects Included in the Annual Development Program

Research Title

Issues and Challenges of Implementation of Development Projects in Bangladesh with special focus on time and cost over-run

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

Public investment enhances economic growth directly by improving the extent and quality of human capital and indirectly by facilitating private investment through infrastructure projects. Moreover, public projects create employment which in turn has positive impact on economic growth. Public investment is more important for a developing country like Bangladesh where private investment is low. Public investment is channelized through projects in Bangladesh which are published as annual development programme (ADP) containing a list of projects of all sectors along with their allocation for the year. Note that the ADP of each year gets approval in the parliament as development budget after getting the approval from National Economic Council first.

However, implementation progress report of IMED suggests that a large number of development projects are subject to time and cost overrun. This has significant implications for public exchequer, overall economic growth and the welfare of the people. Hence it is important to identify the major causes of time and cost overruns and take necessary actions to prevent such mis-governance of public projects. The delay in project implementation has been a distinguished characteristics of the public investment in developing countries. For example, five major causes of project delay were identified in Nigeria (Mansfield, 1994) and these are (a) poor contract management (b) inaccurate estimations (c) over all price fluctuation (d) shortages of materials and equipment (e) finance and payments agreements. The faulty and half-baked project documents have been labelled as a common cause of project delay in almost all countries experiencing delays. Al-Momani (2000) called this problem as the problems with "project design". That is, not enough resources and time have been used to conceptualize the projects and design accordingly.

Poor ADP implementation leads to lower growth rate with limited scope to employment generation. Cost and time overrun will increase the size of ADP as well as increase social cost. In the case of aided project, longer implementation period have high rate of interest and add to more repayment schedule.

Bangladesh lags behind in completing most projects in time and within budget, causing cost overruns and lowering the expected benefits from the projects. The implementation rates of the much publicized first-track projects are worth noting. The poor and sluggish implementation rates of the government's much publicized first-track projects such as the

Padma Multipurpose Bridge, Padma bridge railway link and Dhaka Mass Rapid Transport are cases in example.

1.2. Impact of slow implementation of development projects

It is thus evident that development projects in Bangladesh have a tendency to go through multiple phases of revision resulting in time escalation and cost escalation. Because of this, when juxtaposed against the initial projections as regards expected outcomes and deliverables, the majority of projects fail to attain the objectives and targets set initially including the estimates of internal rate of return, financial rate of return and the economic rate of return.

For instance, when the construction of a road connecting major business hubs gets delayed, private investors and businessmen who were expected to gain from the particular project in areas of investment, employment generation, production and reduced supply and transportation costs fail to do so. Consumers are deprived of the timely delivery of services accruing from the investment. All these undermine the cause of economic growth of the country and socio-welfare of citizens.

Secondly, because of the delayed implementation and high costs involved, the cost of the services to be delivered by the project also rises. If it is a power plant, then the price of electricity would rise each time the project's implementation is delayed, if it is a bridge then either the toll or subsidy or both will need to rise when it is built and operationalized. In the final analysis, the burden falls either on the consumers or the producers. Consumer welfare is reduced; producer's competitiveness is adversely affected.

1.3. Research Questions

This study identifies the major causes of project delay in three phases of the project lifecycle – project formulation and approval stage, implementation stage and post-implementation stage. We have formulated a wide range of hypotheses regarding time and cost overrun at each stage upon discussions with the stakeholders and a comprehensive desk review of relevant documents. The hypotheses are:

1.3.1 Project formulation and approval stage

i. Projects are approved without adequate feasibility study and stakeholder consultations.

ii. Weak project documents are used where objectives, inputs, outputs, OVIs, MOV, etc. are not well documented.
iii. Projects involving land acquisitions do not provide due care to the issues of land acquisition such as permission from DC upon identifying the specific land.
iv. Projects with weak sustainability plan are approved.
v. The costs of projects are inconsistent with Midterm Budgetary Framework (MTBF)
vi. There is hardly any exit plan for the projects.
vii. Projects involving civil works lack proper designs.
viii. Sometimes projects are approved without ensuring project aids.
ix. Delayed projects are likely to have weak DPP/TPP (due to lack of resources to prepare such documents).

1.3.2 Project implementation stage

i. DPP/TPPs are not followed closely, particularly the work plans and procurement plans.
ii. There are lack of coordination among the implementing agencies in the field.
iii. There is a lack of transparency and accountability of the implementation of the projects.
iv. Meetings of PEC and Steering Committees are not held regularly which slow down the progress of the implementation.
v. Inefficiency and carelessness of the project staff delay the projects.
vi. There are problems in choosing the right contractors. Sometimes the favored contractors are overburdened with works that they cannot complete the works in time.
vii. The contractors do not complete the works (packages) in time and demand for additional time and costs.
viii. There is a lack of laboratories and equipment to monitor the quality of infrastructure works.
ix. Land acquisition is a major challenge in completing the projects in time.
x. Transfer of utilities, resettlements and evacuation of illegal structures delay the implementation of projects.
xi. Delay in recruiting PD, project staff, frequent transfer of PDs can delay implementation.

xii. The PDs and project staff lack adequate skills in project implementation and there is also a lack of incentives to perform.

xiii. There is no set pool of government officials identified who are good at implementing projects.

xiv. IMED lacks capacity and efficiency in monitoring and evaluation.

1.3.3 Post-implementation stage

i. Projects are closed hastily without sending project closing report (PCR) to IMED or sending a weak report of little use.

ii. The physical capital accumulated through projects are not properly stored.

iii. Lack of skilled people leads to hiring international consultants for providing service (LTSA: Long Term Service Agreement).

2 METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods have been used – both quantitative and qualitative data have been used for the analysis.

Desk Review

The documents reviewed:

i. In-depth Monitoring 2021-22: Report on 65 Projects

ii. Completed Project Evaluation 2021-22: Report on 8 Projects

iii. In-depth Monitoring 2017-18 to 2020-21: Report on 100 Projects

iv. Completed Project Evaluation 2017-18 to 2020-21: Report on 30 Projects

v. In-depth Post Procurement Review 2021-22: Report on 9 Projects

vi. In-depth Post Procurement Review 2017-18 to 2020-21: Report on 9 Projects

vii. ADP Review Report of IMED from 2017-18 to 2020-21

viii. Inspection Reports of IMED for on-going Projects from 2017-18 to 2021-22: 100 such reports

ix. Inspection Reports of IMED for Completed Projects (Upon receipt of Project Completion Report(PCR)) from 2017-18 to 2021-22: 50 such reports

x. Inspection Reports of IMED for No-Cost Time Extension of on-going Projects from 2017-18 to 2021-22: 100 such reports

xi. Relevant literature

Data

The following data are used to supplement our qualitative works

i. An online survey to test the hypotheses outlined above have been conducted. This online questionnaire has been sent to the officials of the Planning Commission, IMED, Ministries and Project Directors (PDs) of the projects. The questionnaire covers the perception on the causes of delays listed above and also what have they experienced in implementing projects.

ii. We have compiled a data set which includes the details of all projects in the last one year such as total costs, amount of PA, financial progress, physical progress, etc. We will try to relate financial progress and physical progress to project characteristics.

3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS AND EXTENT OF PROGRESS

3.1 Financial Progress and Ministries

We compile project level data of IMED. The distribution of projects by 43 ministries in 2020-21 are given in the table below. The local government division had 273 projects which is 17.51 percent of the total projects in our sample. The road transport and highway division comes next – 184 projects accounting for about 12 percent of total projects.

Table: Distribution of projects by ministries

Ministry Name	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Bangladesh Election Commission Secret.	4	0.26	0.26
Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat	1	0.06	0.32
Bangladesh Public Service Commission	2	0.13	0.45
Cabinet Division	7	0.45	0.90
Economic Relations Division (ERD)	8	0.51	1.41
Energy and Mineral Resources Division	30	1.92	3.34
Finance Division	5	0.32	3.66
Financial Institution Division	6	0.38	4.04
Health Services Division	53	3.40	7.44
Implementation Monitoring & evaluation	2	0.13	7.57
Internal Resources Division (IRD)	6	0.38	7.95
Law and Justice Division	7	0.45	8.40
Local Government Division	273	17.51	25.91
Ministry of Agriculture	103	6.61	32.52
Ministry of Commerce	10	0.64	33.16
Ministry of Cultural Affairs	16	1.03	34.19
Ministry of Defense	25	1.60	35.79
Ministry of Disaster Management and R..	13	0.83	36.63
Ministry of Environment, Forest and C..	36	2.31	38.94

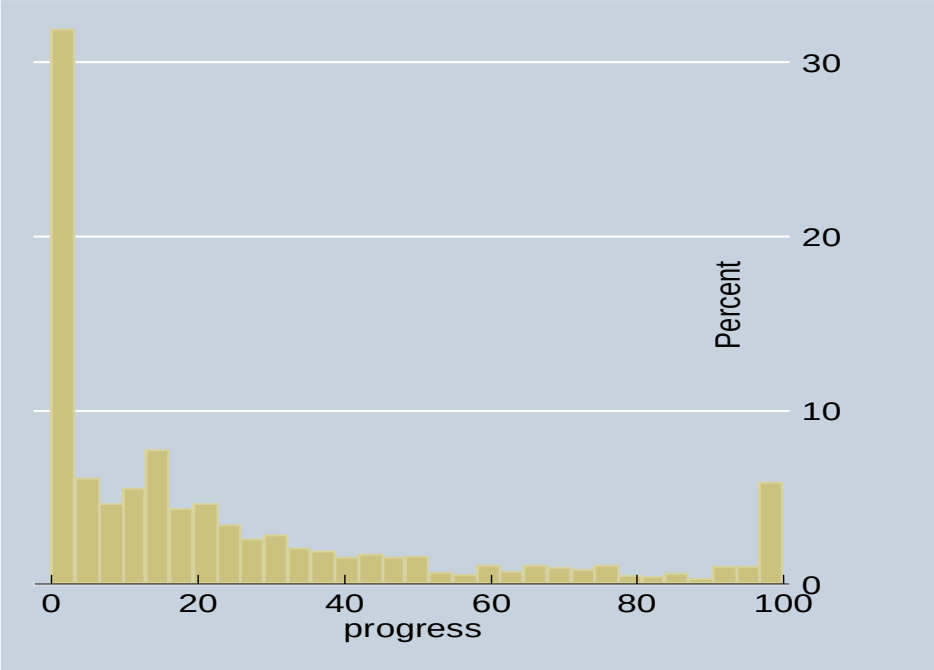
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	48	3.08	42.01
Ministry of Food	5	0.32	42.33
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	7	0.45	42.78
Ministry of Housing and Public Works	19	1.22	44.00
Ministry of Industry	48	3.08	47.08
Ministry of Information and Broadcast..	12	0.77	47.85
Ministry of Labour and Employment	98	6.29	54.14
Ministry of Land	9	0.58	54.71
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	14	0.90	55.61
Ministry of Public Administration	16	1.03	56.64
Ministry of Religious Affairs	12	0.77	57.41
Ministry of Science and Technology	27	1.73	59.14
Ministry of Social Welfare	51	3.27	62.41
Ministry of Textiles & Jute	33	2.12	64.53
Ministry of Water Resources	122	7.83	72.35
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	24	1.54	73.89
Ministry of Youth and Sports	26	1.67	75.56
Planning Division	19	1.22	76.78
Prime Minister's Office	19	1.22	78.00
Public Security Division	34	2.18	80.18
Road Transport and Highways Division	184	11.80	91.98
Rural Development and Co-operatives D..	25	1.60	93.59
Secondary and Higher Education Division	86	5.52	99.10
Statistics and Informatics Division	14	0.90	100.00
Total	1,559	100.00	

Which Ministry is performing better in terms of spending the allocation? We define the financial progress of a project in a given year as the following:

Financial progress gap = [(total allocation – total expenditure) x 100]/ total allocation

The distribution of progress gap is given in a figure below. We plot progress gap rate on the horizontal axis and percentage of progress is on the vertical axis. It shows that for more than 30 percent of the projects, there is no gap in 2020-21. About 5 percent of projects had 100 percent gap, meaning there was progress. The mean progress gap rate was about 25 percent, that is, about 25 percent of the total allocation was unspent. It is the share of zero-progress projects that is pulling the progress rate down.

Figure: Distribution of progress gap rates of the projects



We analyzed 1557 projects of 2020-21 to study the relative performance of the ministries. We use Prime Minister's Office as our reference group. If the p-value is less than 0.10, we consider the values statistically significant. One, two and three stars signify statistically significant at 10, 5 and 1 percent level. If the coefficients are not significant, we label the ministries as "No statistical differences" from PMO. That, their progress gap is similar to that of PMO. In the case of significant differences, we report the value with standard errors. For example, in the case of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (sl. no. 28), the

Table: Progress of the projects by ministries relative to PMO

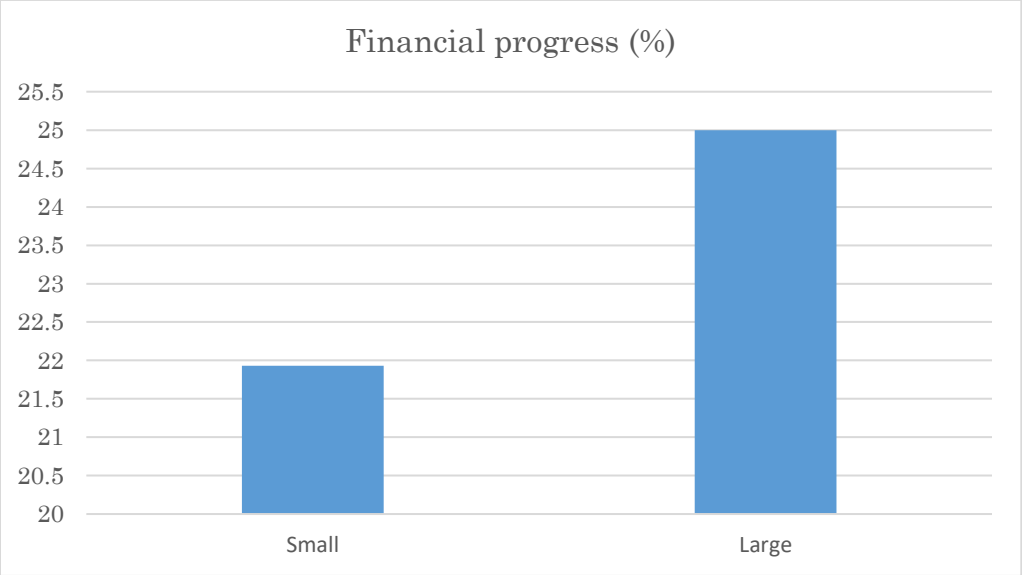
Sl. No.	Name of ministry	Progress relative to Prime Minister's Office
1.	Bangladesh Election Commission Secretariat	No statistical difference
2.	Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat	No statistical difference
3.	Bangladesh Public Service Commission	No statistical difference
4.	Cabinet Division	32.34*** (12.59)
5.	Economic Relations Division (ERD)	No statistical difference
6.	Energy and Mineral Resources Division	-17.26**(8.35)
7.	Finance Division	No statistical difference
8.	Financial Institution Division	No statistical difference
9.	Health Services Division	No statistical difference
10.	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED)	No statistical difference
11.	Internal Resources Division (IRD)	27.21**(13.33)

12.	Law and Justice Division	No statistical difference
13.	Local Government Division	No statistical difference
14.	Ministry of Agriculture	-24.67***(7.11)
15.	Ministry of Commerce	No statistical difference
16.	Ministry of Cultural Affairs	No statistical difference
17.	Ministry of Defense	No statistical difference
18.	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief	No statistical difference
19.	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	-16.09**(8.07)
20.	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	-13.10*(7.71)
21.	Ministry of Food	No statistical difference
22.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	13.02***(12.59)
23	Ministry of Housing and Public Works	No statistical difference
24.	Ministry of Industry	No statistical difference
25.	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting	37.83***(10.50)
26.	Ministry of Labor and Employment	No statistical difference
27.	Ministry of Land	No statistical difference
28.	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	26.67***(10.03)
29.	Ministry of Public Administration	No statistical difference
30.	Ministry of Religious Affairs	No statistical difference
31.	Ministry of Science and Technology	-17.37**(8.52)
32.	Ministry of Social Welfare	15.05**(7.65)
33.	Ministry of Textiles & Jute	No statistical difference
34.	Ministry of Water Resources	No statistical difference
35.	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	No statistical difference
36.	Ministry of Youth and Sports	No statistical difference
37.	Planning Division	No statistical difference
38.	Prime Minister's Office	Reference group
39.	Public Security Division	No statistical difference
40.	Road Transport and Highways Division	-18.08***(6.86)
41.	Rural Development and Co-operatives Division	No statistical difference
42.	Secondary and Higher Education Division	No statistical difference
43.	Statistics and Informatics Division	No statistical difference

coefficient is 26.67. This means that the progress gap rate is 26 percent higher compared to PMO. On the other hand, consider Road Transport and Highways Division (sl. no. 40). The coefficient is -18.08. This implies that the progress gap rate is 18 percent lower than that of PMO. Of the 42 Ministries (not considering PMO), performance of the 30 Ministries are very similar to PMO. Of the 12 ministries with statistically different performances, 50 percent performed better and 50 percent performed worse than the PMO.

3.2 Project size and financial progress

Median of the size of the project is BDT 14,583 lac. We label a project small if the size of the project is below the median value and large if the size of the project is larger than the median value. Data show that larger the projects, slower the rate of progress.



We also regress the progress rate of the project on the size of the project. The regression results show that one percentage increase in the size of project lowers the rate of financial progress gap by 1.05 percent.

```
      Source |       SS           df       MS      Number of obs   =     1,557
-------------+----------------------------------   F(1, 1555)      =      5.72
       Model |  5399.56329         1  5399.56329   Prob > F        =    0.0168
    Residual |   1466765.7     1,555  943.257687   R-squared       =    0.0037
-------------+----------------------------------   Adj R-squared   =    0.0030
       Total |  1472165.27     1,556  946.121637   Root MSE        =    30.713

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
    progress |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
size_project |  -1.057076   .4418165    -2.39   0.017    -1.923695   -.1904567
       _cons |    33.5815   4.305136     7.80   0.000     25.13701    42.02598
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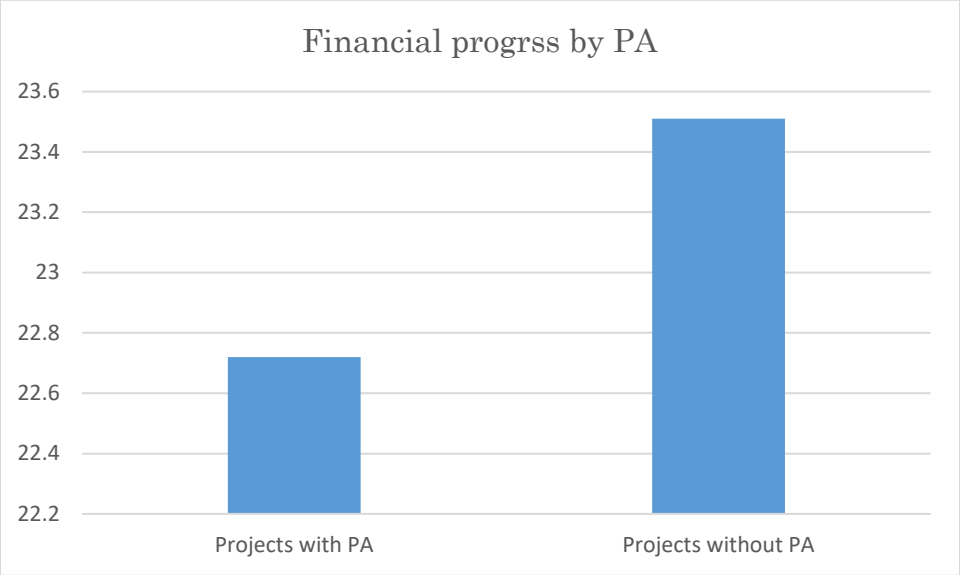
3.3 Project aid and financial progress

In our sample, only about 12 percent of the projects are with project aids. Distribution of projects by the number of donors are given in the table below.

Table: distribution of projects by number of donors

Number of development partners	Number of projects	Percent
0	1306	83.77
1	184	11.8
2	51	3.27
3	10	0.64
4	8	0.51
Total	1559	100

Though the progress gap rate of the projects with PA is lower than the projects without PA, the difference is not statistically significant.



We again regress the rate of progress on the dummy variable of project aid. The dummy variable takes the value of 1 if the project has PA and 0 otherwise. The regression results show that there is no significant difference in progress rates between the projects with PA and the projects without PA, though the sign is negative.

```
    Source |       SS           df       MS      Number of obs   =     1,557
-------------+----------------------------------   F(1, 1555)      =      0.17
       Model |  158.881854         1  158.881854   Prob > F        =    0.6821
    Residual |  1472006.38     1,555    946.6279   R-squared       =    0.0001
-------------+----------------------------------   Adj R-squared   =   -0.0005
       Total |  1472165.27     1,556  946.121637   Root MSE        =    30.767

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
    progress |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
```

```
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
 project_aid |  -.8659292   2.113659    -0.41   0.682    -5.011852    3.279993
       _cons |   23.59161   .8520221    27.69   0.000     21.92038    25.26285
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF PROJECTS WITH NO-COST EXTENSION

We compile a dataset on the characteristics of the projects which were subject to no-cost extension in the last 3 years. We try to understand the characteristics of these projects. The summary statistics of these projects are given below.

Variables	Obs.	Mean	Standard deviation	Min.	Max
No. of PDs in the project life	79	1.84	1.28	0	7
Share of PDs with additional responsibility	10	12.7	31.82	0	100
Number of audit objections	22	4.45	5.36	0	20
No. of audits settled	5	0.20	0.45	0	1
No. of PIC meetings (target as per DPP)	22	12.77	11.24	0	47
No. of PIC meetings held	22	5.17	4.45	1	15
No. of PSC meetings (target as per DPP)	20	11.75	10.73	2	47
No. of PSC meetings held	24	4.73	3.78	1	14

Note that the new format of the DPP has been introduced only in 2022 which has detailed information of PDs, audits and meetings. Hence the number of observations is small. However, though small, it gives us a glimpse of the project management of the projects which were extended without additional costs. Of the 79 projects, average no. of PDs in the project life is 1.84. Interestingly the maximum number of PDs in a project is 7. This indicates frequent changes of PDs in a project life which is argued to delay the project implementation. About 12.7 percent of the PDs had additional responsibility of other projects. This is also another factor responsible for time overrun.

The average number of audit objections is 4.45 with maximum number of 20. Only 5 projects reported whether audit objections were settled and only out of 5 were settled.

As per DPP, average targeted number of PIC meetings was 12.77 with maximum number of 47. However, the average number of meetings actually held was only 5.17 with maximum number of 15. We find similar patterns for the PSC meetings. According to DPP, the targeted number of PSC was 11.75 with the maximum number of 47. But, the projects in our sample

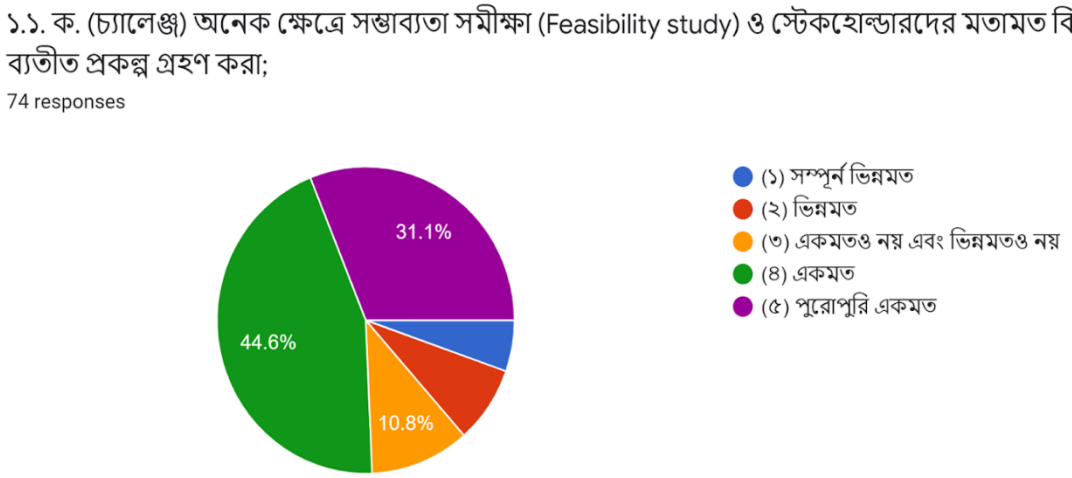
held only 4.73 meetings on average. Irregular meetings or non-occurrence of PIC and PSC meetings can thwart the progress of the projects.

4 OPINION OF THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON THE CAUSES OF PROJECT DELAY

Project formulation and approval stage

i. Projects are approved without adequate feasibility study and stakeholder consultations.

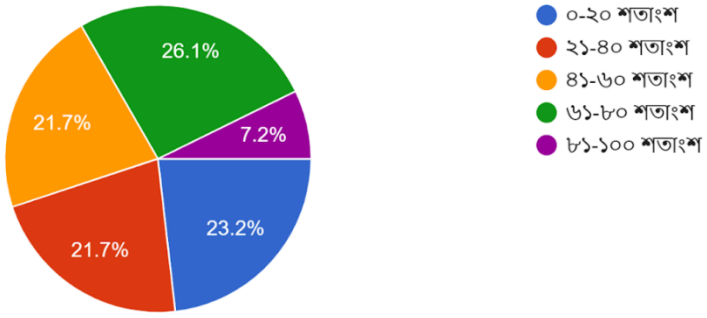
First we ask the government officials about their opinion on the above statement. About 76 percent of the respondents have either agreed or fully agreed. About 11 percent of them are indifferent. That is, only 13 percent of the respondents do not agree with the above statement. This indicates that feasibility study and consultation with the relevant stakeholders have not been done adequately and this is a major area of concern.



Now, we want to know the experiences of the respondents. To what extent they have experienced such lack of feasibility study or stakeholder consultations. About 26 percent of the respondents answered that they had experienced such lacking in 61-81 percent of the projects. About 43 percent of the respondents experienced such problems in about 21-60 percent of the projects. This figure shows that the respondents have experienced with projects which were characterized by inadequate feasibility studies.

১.১. খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্প যথাযথ সম্ভাব্যতা সমীক্ষা (Feasibility study) ও স্টেকহোল্ডারদের মতামত বিশ্লেষণ ব্যতীত গ্রহণ করা হয়েছে?

69 responses



ii. Weak project documents are used where objectives, inputs, outputs, OVIs, MOV, etc. are not well documented.

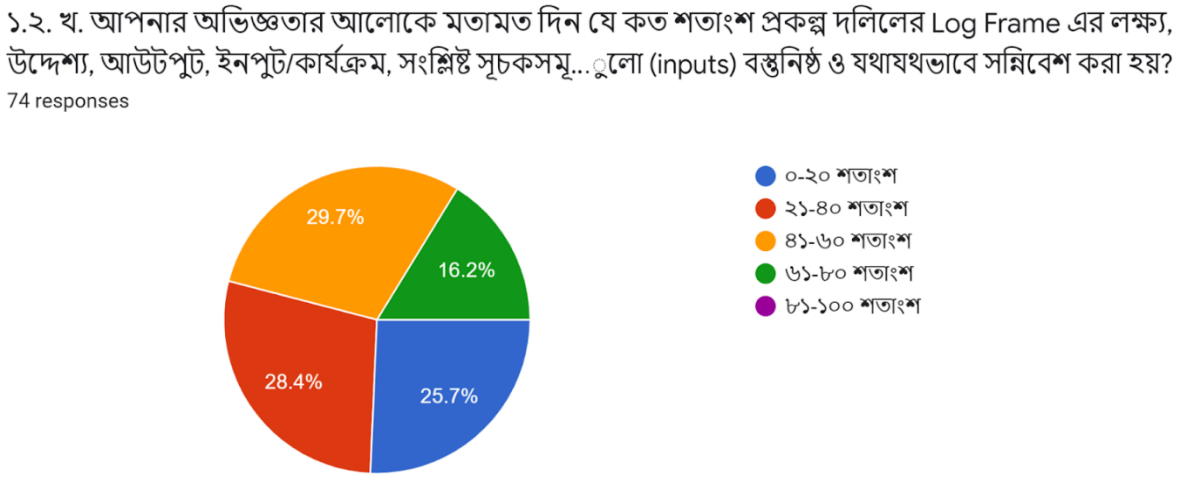
The following pie diagram shows the opinion of the respondents on having proper project documents incorporating objectives, inputs, outputs, OVIs, MOV, etc. About 72 percent of the respondents are either agreed or fully agreed on the statement that there is a problem of weak project documents. About 16 percent are indifferent and the rest 12 percent do not agree. This indicates that overwhelming majority has opined that project documents are weak and this is a serious problems.

১.২. ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) প্রকল্প দলিলের Log Frame এর লক্ষ্য, উদ্দেশ্য, আউটপুট, ইনপুট/কার্যক্রম, সংশ্লিষ্ট সূচকসমূহ (OVI), মূল্যায়ন পদ্ধতি (MOV) এবং অনুমানসমূ...uts) বস্তুনিষ্ঠ ও যথাযথভাবে সন্নিবেশিত করা হয় না।

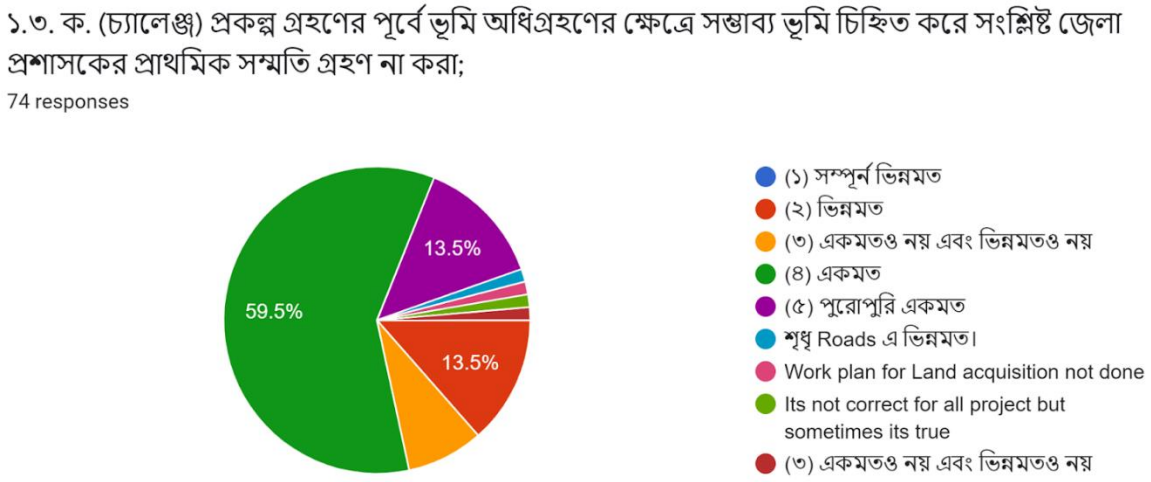
74 responses



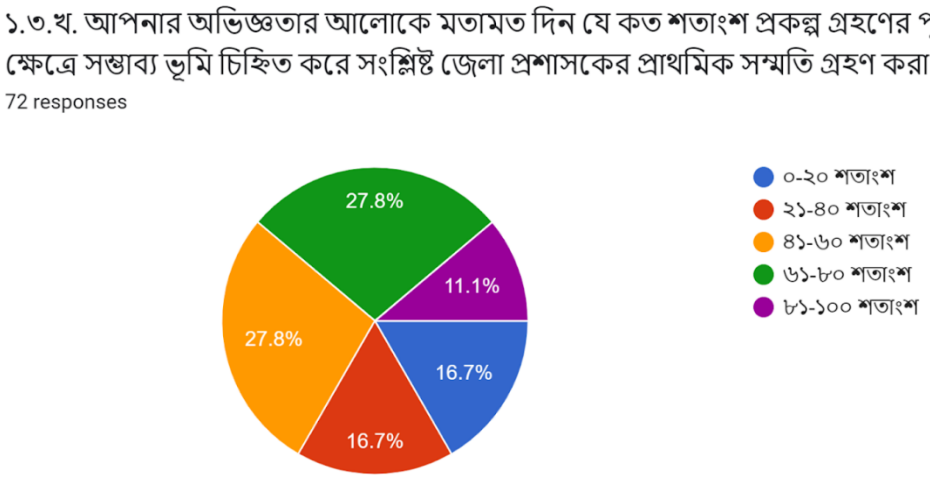
What percentages of projects are subject to such problems of weak project documents? About 16 percent of the respondents experienced high incidence of such problem – 61-81 percent of the projects in their careers. About 30 percent had personal experiences of weak documents of about 41-60 percent. This indicates that the opinions stated above are based largely on the personal experiences of the respondents.



iii. Projects involving land acquisitions do not provide due care to the issues of land acquisition such as permission from DC upon identifying the specific land.



Land acquisition for a project is a complex process and it is argued to be a major reason for the delay of the projects. However, sometimes the proper process has not been followed such as identifying land and taking permission from DC. The above figure shows that about 60 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that the process of land acquisition has been followed properly. About 14 percent have fully agreed. There is also a comment that work plan for land acquisition is not prepared. A few respondents have disagreed and they disagreed only for road construction.



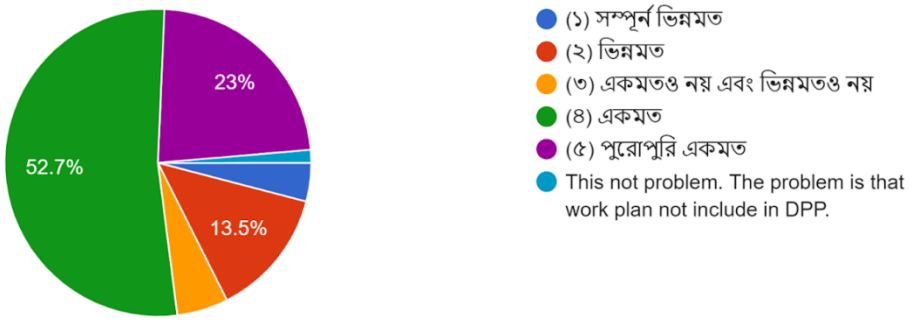
Regarding the percentage of projects, about 11 percent of the respondents think, based on their experiences, that this has been the case for 81-100 percent of the projects. About equal share (28%) of the respondents think that 21-40 and 41-60 percent of the projects went through such problems.

iv. Projects with weak sustainability plan are approved.

In order to ensure the full benefits of the project in the post-project periods, it is essential to have a sustainability plan. However, many project lacks such plan and it delays the completion of the project when such issues arise towards the end of the projects. About 23 percent fully agreed and three-fourth of the respondents agreed that such sustainability plan has been missing from the DPP. There is a comment that this problem arises due to lack of adequate work plan.

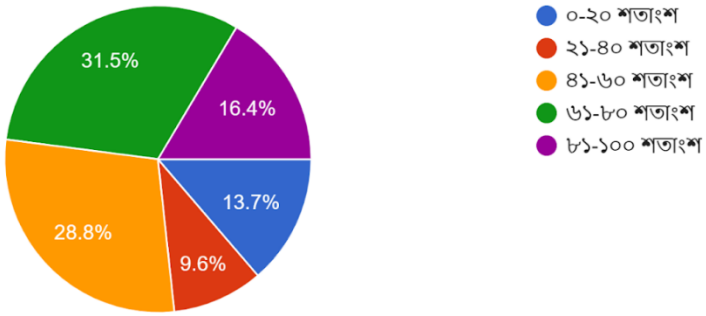
১.৪.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) প্রকল্পের আওতায় নির্মিতব্য স্থাপনাসমূহের প্রকল্প পরবর্তী সময়ে রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ/সংস্কার কাজের ব্যবস্থাপনা ও পূর্ণ ব্যবহার কীরূপে নিশ্চিত করা ...খা অর্থাৎ sustainable plan ডিপিপি'তে সংযুক্ত না থাকা;

74 responses



১.৪.খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পের আওতায় নির্মিতব্য স্থাপনাসমূহের প্রকল্প পরবর্তী সময়ে রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ/সংস্...া অর্থাৎ sustainable plan ডিপিপি'তে সংযুক্ত থাকে না।

73 responses

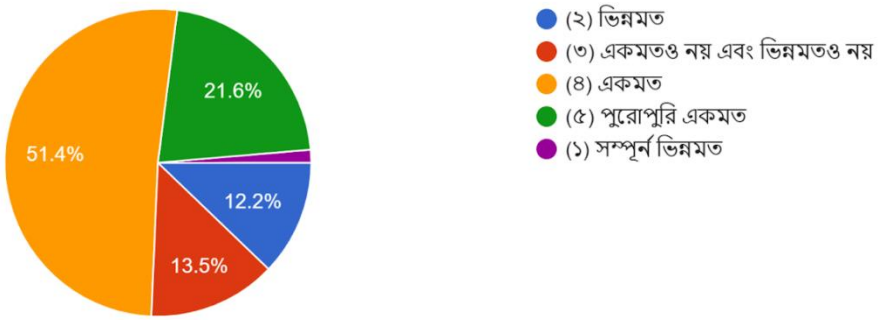


About 16 percent of the respondents think that this has been the case for 81-100 percent of the projects. 31 percent of the respondents think that this problem lies with about 61-80 percent of the projects. This figure is 29 percent for 41-60 percent of the projects.

v. The costs of projects are inconsistent with Midterm Budgetary Framework (MTBF)

১.৫.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) মধ্য মেয়াদী বাজেট কাঠামো MTBF-র আর্থিক সিলিং অনুসরণ না করে প্রকল্প গ্রহণ;

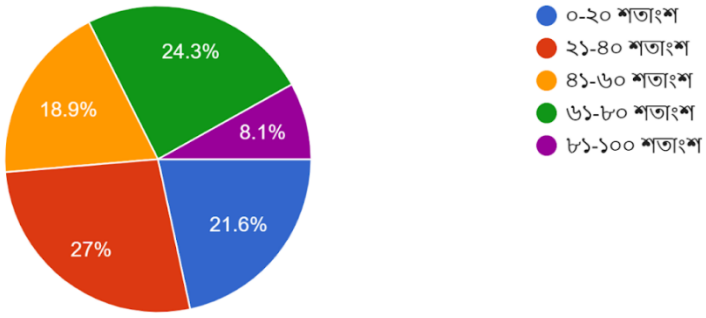
74 responses



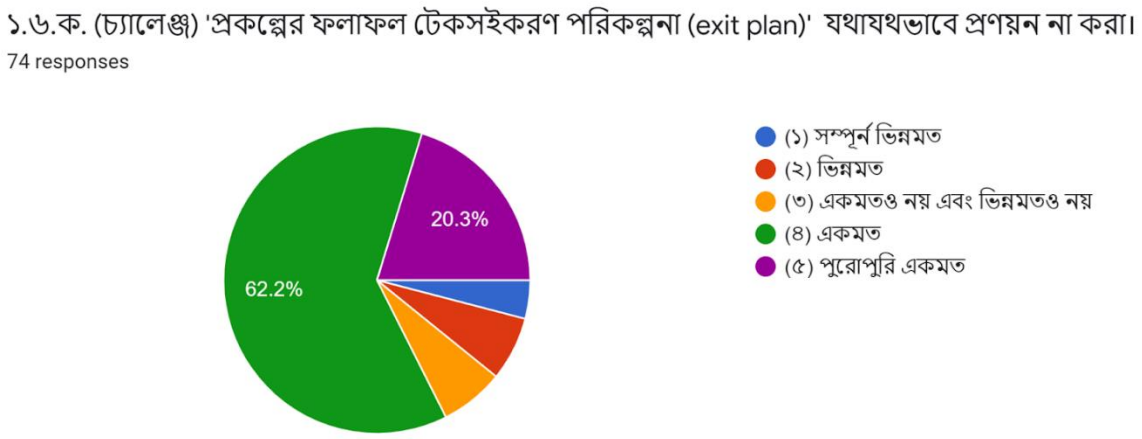
About 73 percent of the respondents agreed that projects do not follow the cost ceiling of MTBF, of which about 22 percent fully agreed to this. Only 12.2 percent did not agree to the statement. About one-fourth of the respondents, based on their experiences, think that 61-80 percent of the projects had such problems (figure below). About 22 percent think that 0-20 percent of the projects are subject to such challenges.

১.৫.খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পে মেয়াদী বাজেট কাঠামো MTBF-র আর্থিক সিলিং অনুসরণ না করে প্রকল্প গ্রহণ করা হয়।

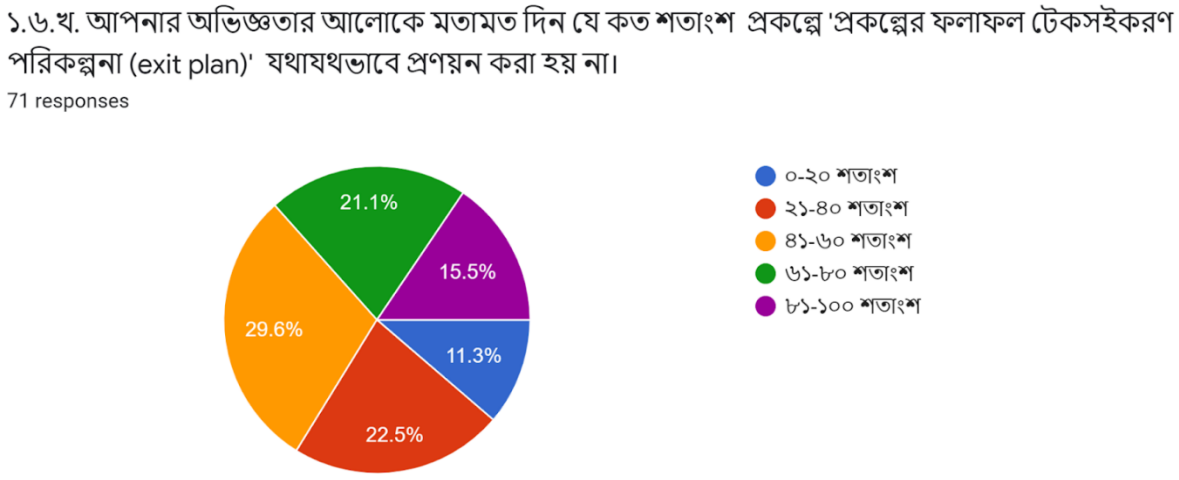
74 responses



vi. There is hardly any exit plan for the projects.



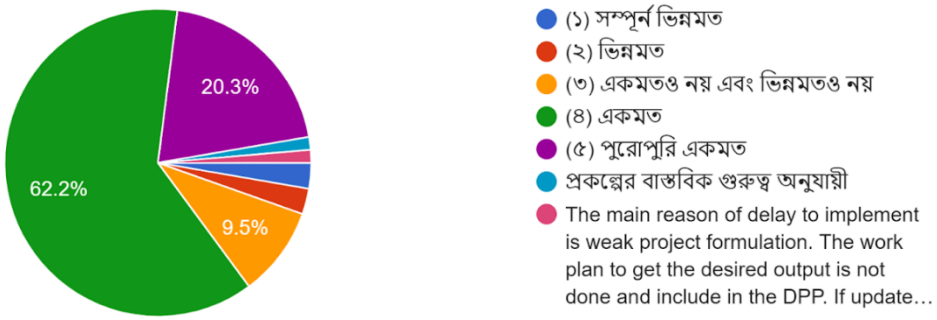
About 83 percent of the respondents agreed that there is hardly any exit plan for the projects. This result is related to the sustainability of the project. About 16 percent of the respondents think that 81-100 percent of projects suffer from such shortcomings. This figure is 21 percent for 61-80 percent of the projects and 30 percent for 41-60 percent of the projects.



vii. Projects involving civil works lack proper designs.

১.৮.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) প্রকল্পের আওতায় ভৌত কাজের যথাযথ ডিজাইন না থাকায় প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন পর্যায়ে পরিবর্তন করা;

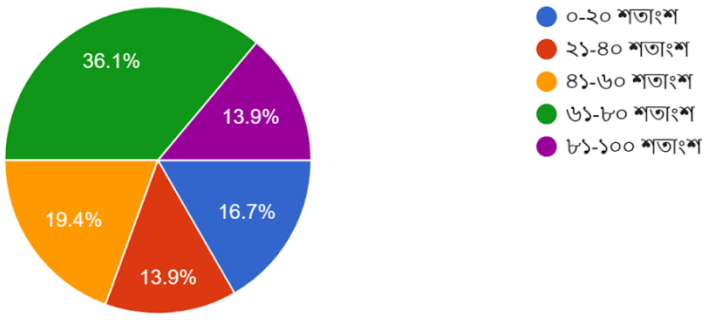
74 responses



Engineering design of the civil works is key to successful completion of the projects. However, many projects have been found to have very weak design and this causes delays and cost overrun of the projects. About 85 percent of the respondents agreed that projects that require civil works lack proper engineering drawings. About half the respondents think that 61-100 percent of the projects had to change the design for not having a proper design to begin with.

১.৮.খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পের আওতাভুক্ত ভৌত কাজের যথাযথ ডিজাইন না থাকায় প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন পর্যায়ে তা পরিবর্তন করা হয়।

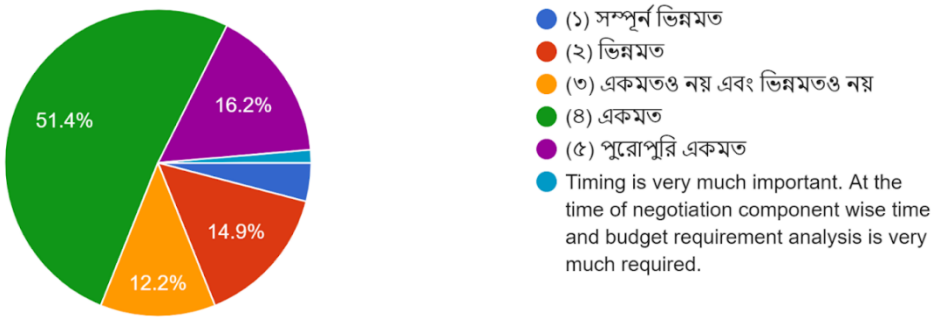
72 responses



viii. Projects are approved without ensuring project aids (PA).

১.৯.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) প্রকল্পের প্রকল্প সাহায্য নিশ্চিত না করে অনেক ক্ষেত্রে বৈদেশিক সাহায্যপুষ্ট প্রকল্প অনুমোদন করা হয়। ফলে পরবর্তীতে বৈদেশিক সহায়তার চ... সময় বেশি লাগলে প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নও পিছিয়ে যায়।

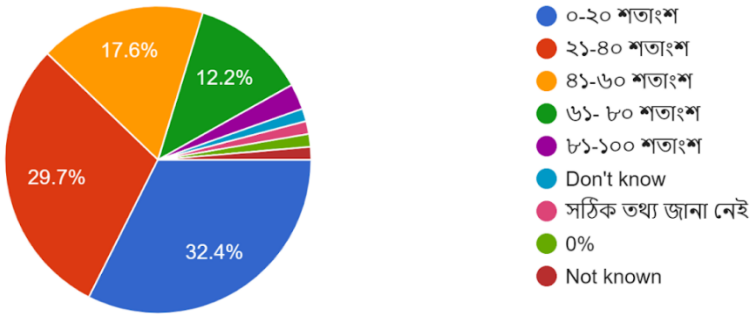
74 responses



If PA is not secured while approving the projects, it takes time for negotiations during the implementation phase and causes delay. About two-thirds of the respondents think that this is a correct statement. There is a comment on the need for component wise negotiation on budget. However, about one-third based on their experiences think that this thing happened only for 0-20 percent of the projects. About 30 percent think that PA was not secured before approval only for 21-40 percent of the projects. This indicates that this is not a major problem in delay.

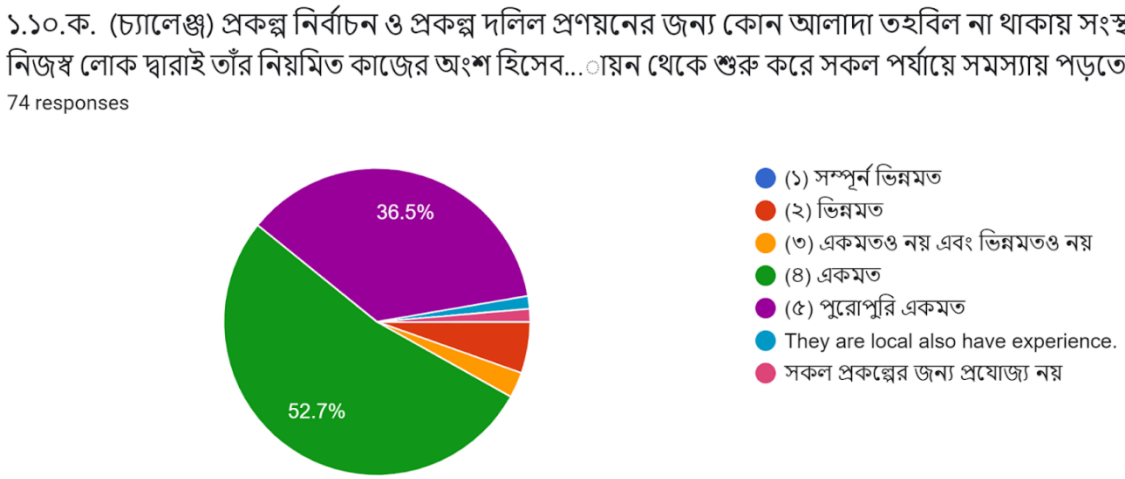
১.৯.খ আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পের প্রকল্প সাহায্য নিশ্চিত না করে সাধারণত বৈদেশিক সাহায্যপুষ্ট প্রকল্প অনুমোদন করা হয়?

74 responses

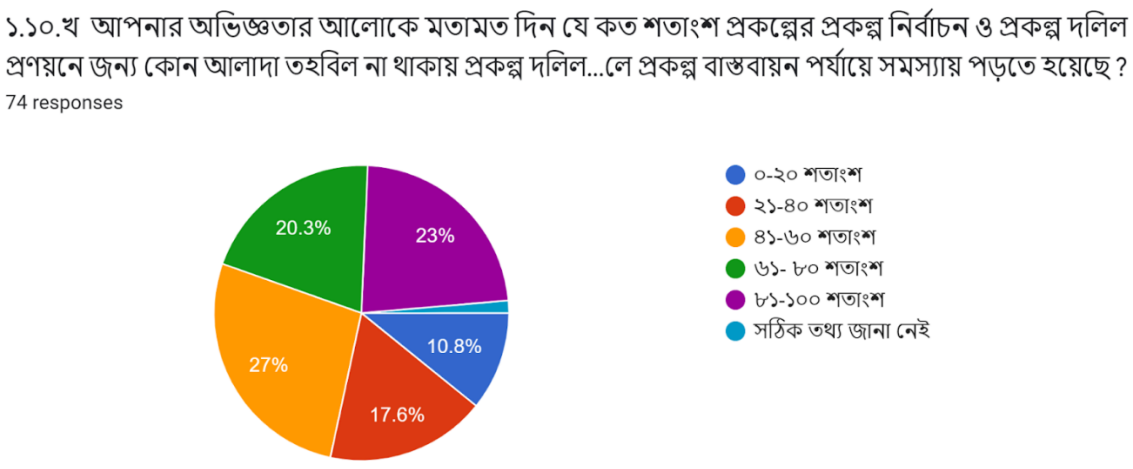


ix. Delayed projects are likely to have weak DPP/TPP (due to lack of resources to prepare such documents).

There is a scarcity of resources to prepare DPP or TPP. The size of the planning wing in each agency or ministry is also very small to handle the pressure of large number of projects. A few people are involved in preparing a large number of DPP/TPP and this compromises the quality of the project documents which later causes delays in project implementation.

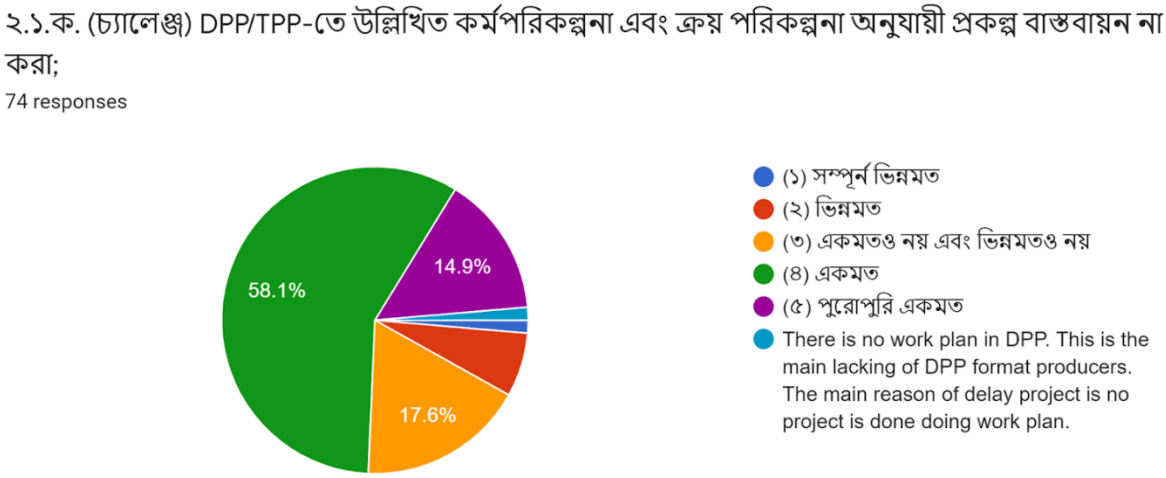


Whopping majority of the respondents - about 89 percent agreed to the statement on the inadequacy of resources to prepare a decent DPP/TPP. About 70 percent of the respondents think that the more than 40 percent of the projects had weak DPP/TPP due to lack of adequate resources.

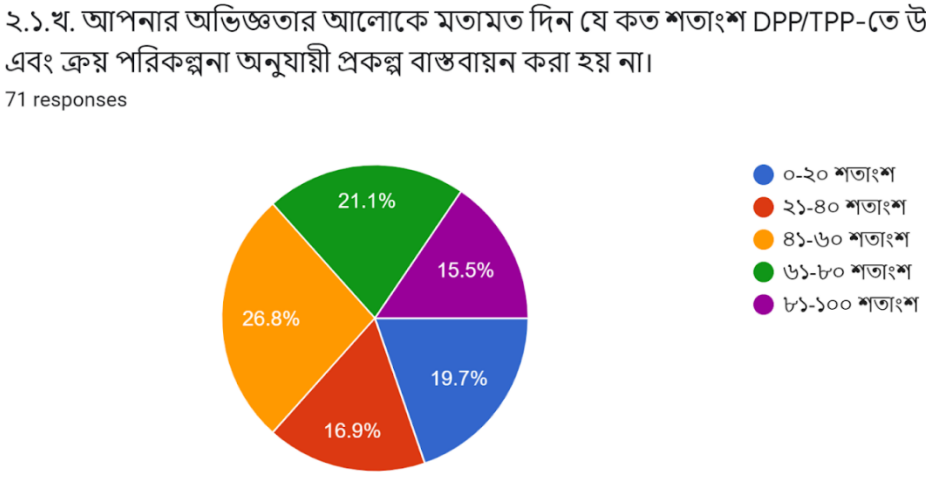


<u>Project implementation stage</u>

i. **DPP/TPPs are not followed closely, particularly the work plans and procurement plans.**



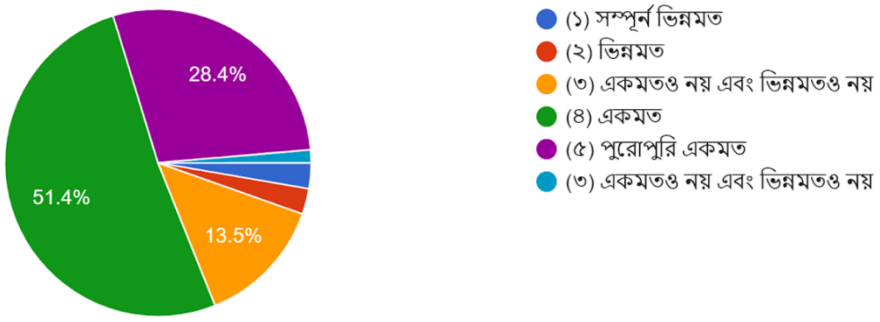
About 59 percent agreed and 15 percent fully agreed with this statement that the work and procurement plans of the DPP/TPPs are not closely followed. A respondent commented that there is no work plan in the DPP which is the main problem of the current DPP format. About two-thirds of the respondents think that more than 40 percent of the projects experienced such challenges (figure below).



ii. **There are lack of coordination among the implementing agencies in the field.**

২.২.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) মাঠ পর্যায়ে প্রকল্প প্রণয়ন ও বাস্তবায়নে প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নকারী সংস্থাসমূহের মধ্যে সমন্বয়হীনতা;

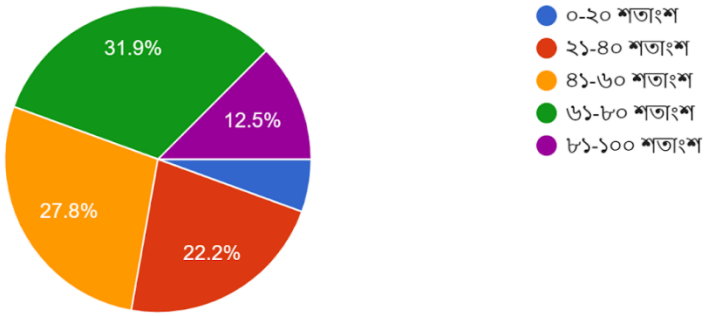
74 responses



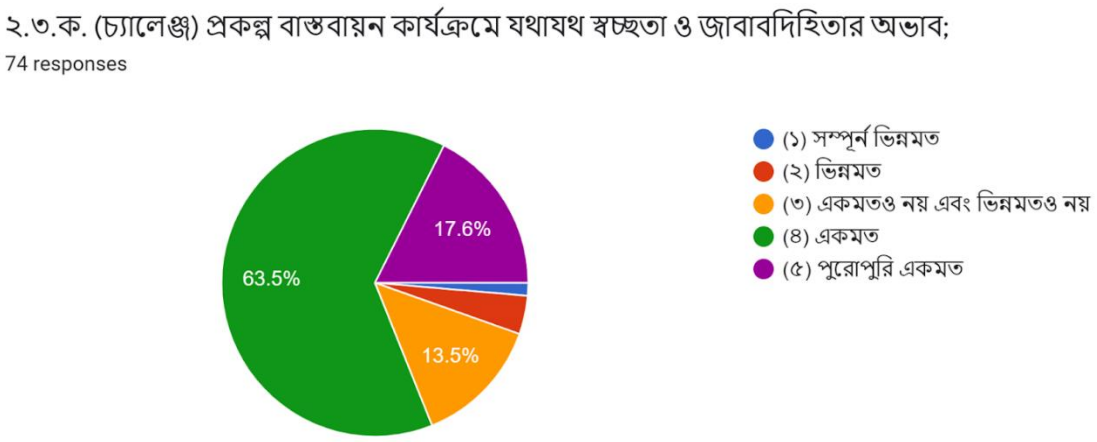
About 80 percent of the respondents think that there are lack of coordination among the implementing agencies in the field. About 14 percent of the respondents are indifferent. About 73 percent of the respondents think that more than 40 percent of the projects experienced lack of coordination in the field.

২.২.খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পের মাঠ পর্যায়ে প্রকল্প প্রণয়ন ও বাস্তবায়নে প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নকারী সংস্থাসমূহের মধ্যে সমন্বয়হীনতা থাকে।

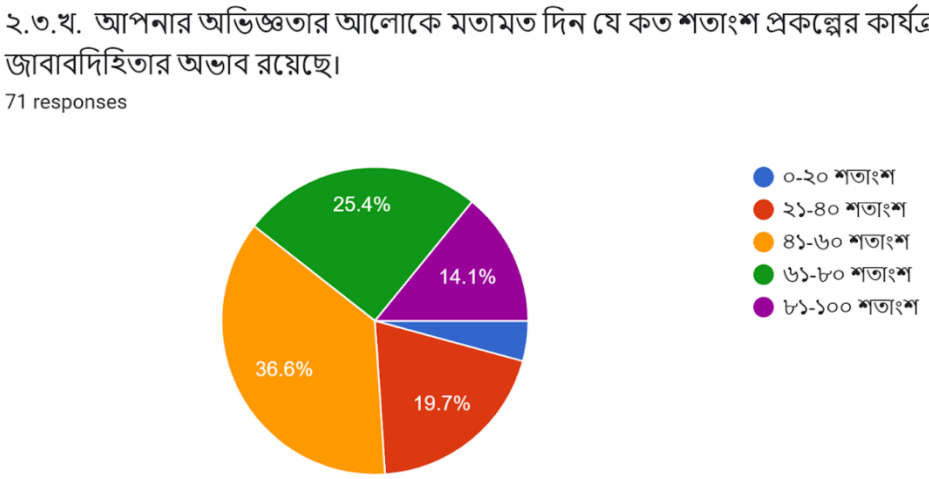
72 responses



iii. There is a lack of transparency and accountability of the implementation of the projects.



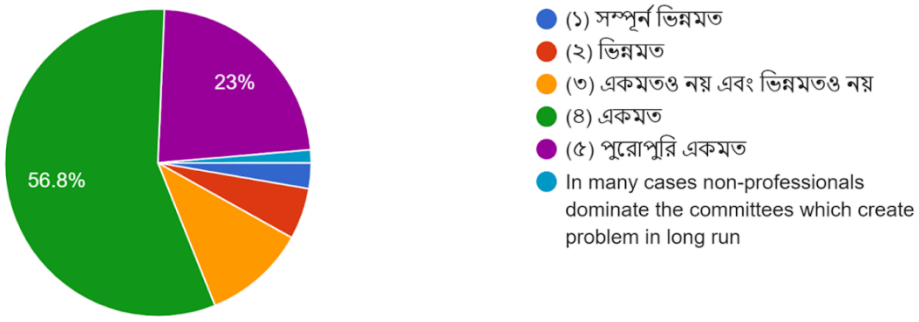
More than 80 percent of the respondents think that there is a lack of transparency and accountability of the implementation of the projects, including 18 percent of fully agreed respondents. The respondents overwhelmingly agreed to this statement. Three-fourths of the respondents believe that more than 40 percent of the projects had such challenges.



iv. Meetings of PEC and Steering Committees are not held regularly which slow down the progress of the implementation.

২.৪.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) নিয়মিত পিআইসি ও স্টিয়ারিং কমিটির সভা আয়োজন না করার ফলে অনেক ক্ষেত্রে প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নের চ্যালেঞ্জগুলোর বিষয়ে আগে থেকেই জানা না থাকায় সমন্বিত সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া যায়না;

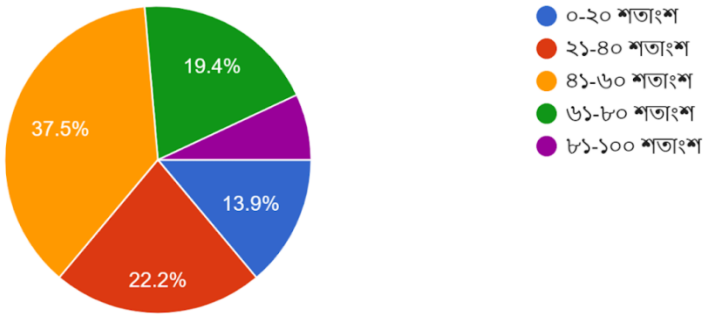
74 responses



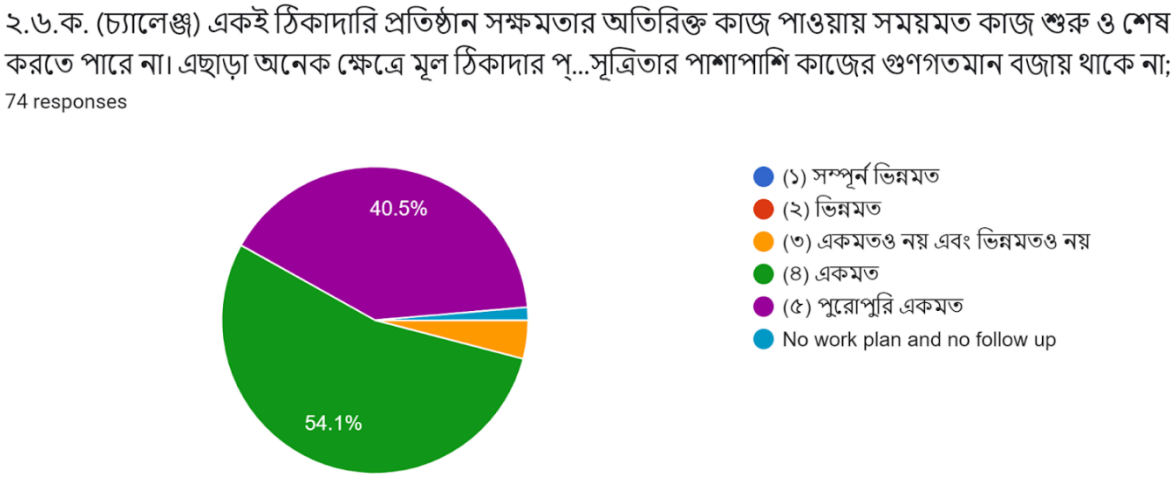
About 80 percent of the respondents think that PEC and steering committee meetings are held on regular basis and this is a major cause for project delays. There is a comment that sometimes non-professionals are included in the committees and this creates problems. This challenge has been experienced by most of the respondents. About two-thirds of the respondents believe that more than 40 percent of the projects had irregular PEC and steering committee meetings.

২.৪.খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পের নিয়মিত পিআইসি ও স্টিয়ারিং কমিটির সভা আয়োজন করা হয় না।

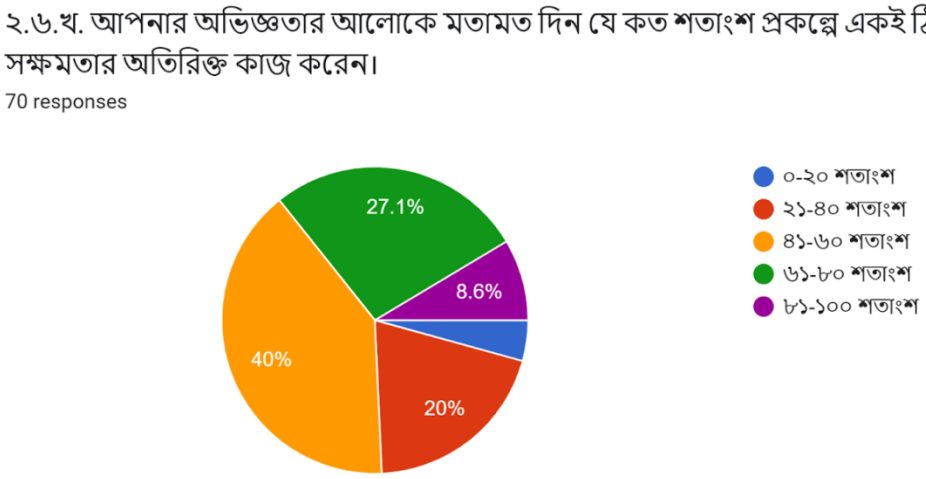
72 responses



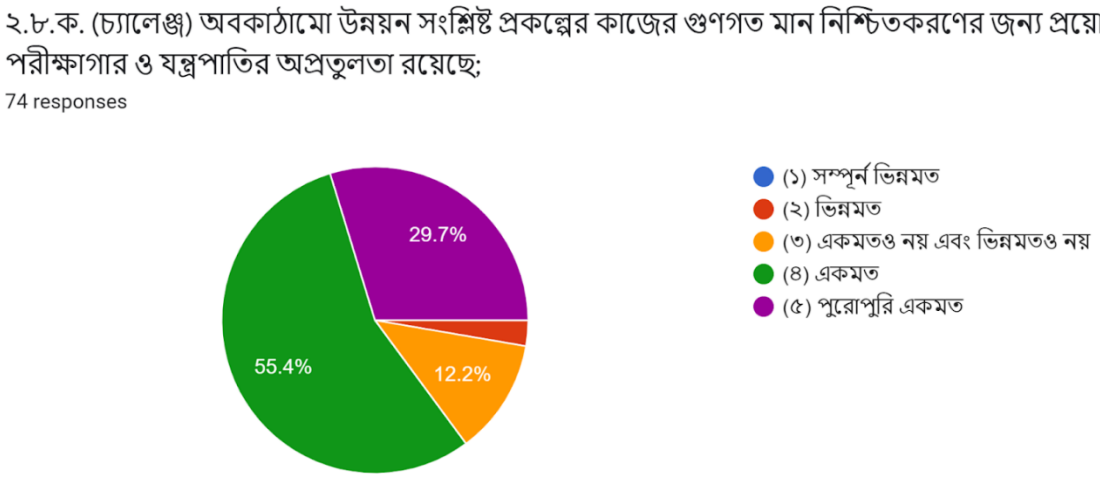
v. **There are problems in choosing the right contractors. Sometimes the favored contractors are overburdened with works that they cannot complete the works in time.**



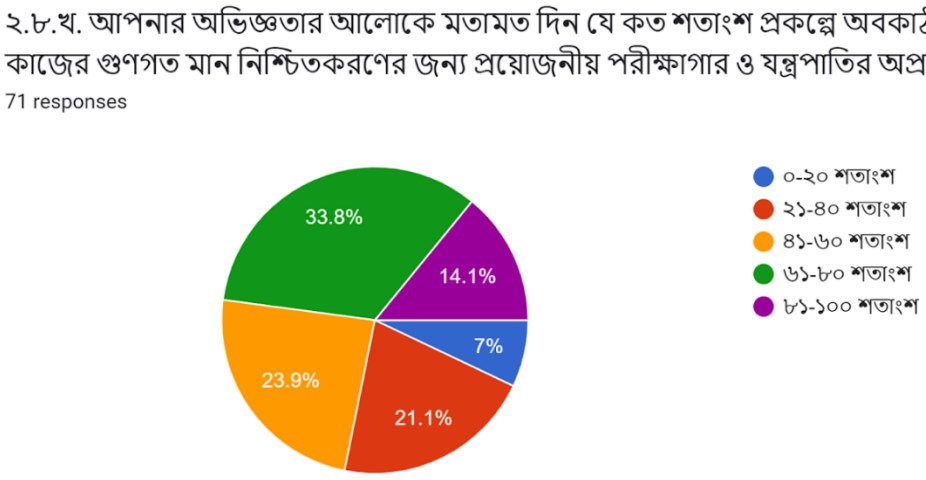
Choice of contractor has been found to be a major challenge. About 41 percent of the respondents fully agreed to this statement. About 54 percent also agreed. This overwhelming response in favor of the statement that the right contractors are not selected suggest the magnitude of the problem. About three-fourths of the respondents think that more than 40 percent of the projects had such problems.



vi. **There is a lack of laboratories and equipment to monitor the quality of infrastructure works.**



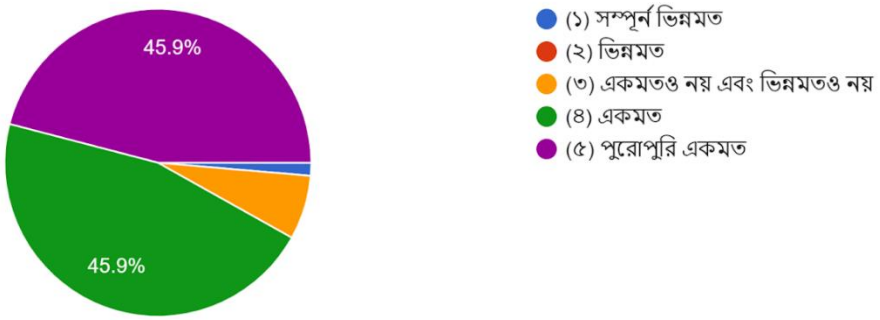
About 85 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that laboratories and equipment are inadequate to monitor the quality of infrastructure works. About 70 percent of the respondents think that more than 40 percent of the projects experienced such challenges for infrastructure works.



vii. **Land acquisition is a major challenge in completing the projects in time.**

২.৯.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) ভূমি অধিগ্রহণে জটিলতার কারণে প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়ন বিলম্বিত হওয়া;

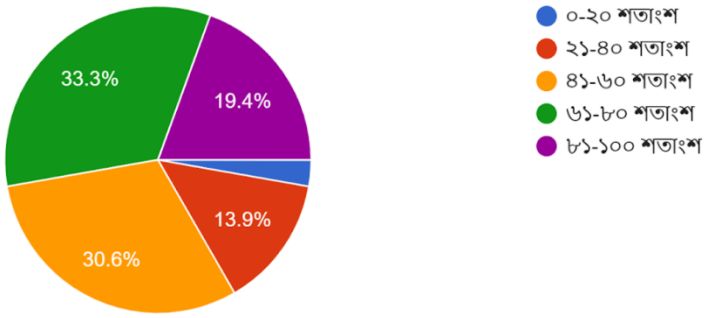
74 responses



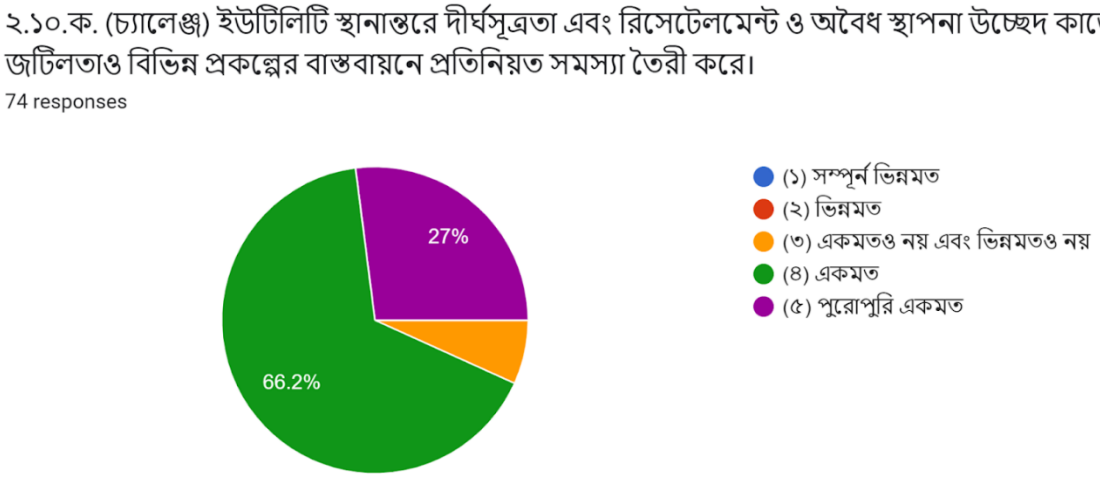
More than 91 percent of the respondents agreed that land acquisition is a major challenge in completing projects. Based on experiences, about 19 percent of the respondents think that 81-100 percent projects have such issues of land acquisition, 33 percent think that land acquisition leads to project delays in 61-80 percent of the projects.

২.৯.খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পের ভূমি অধিগ্রহণ সংক্রান্ত জটিলতার কারণে বাস্তবায়ন বিলম্বিত হয়।

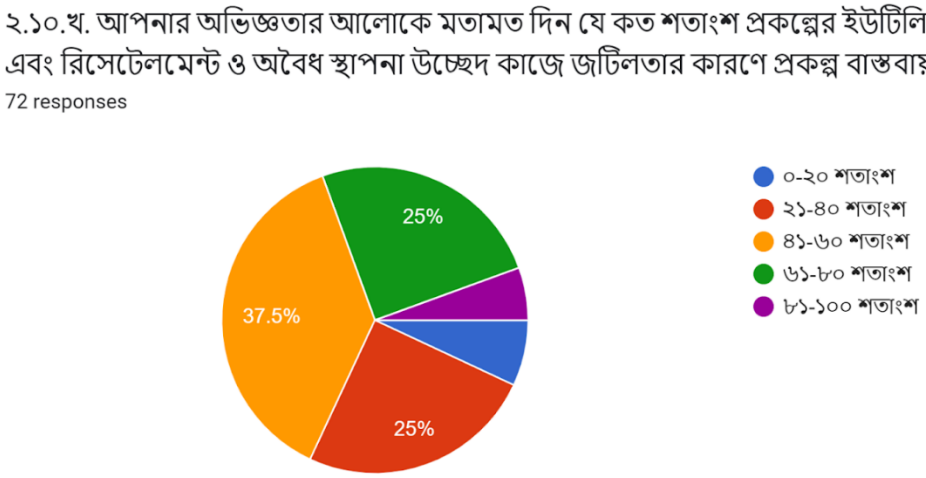
72 responses



viii. Transfer of utilities, resettlements and evacuation of illegal structures delay the implementation of projects.



About 93 percent of the respondents agreed that transfer of utilities, resettlements and evacuation of illegal structures delay the implementation of projects. More than 60 percent of the respondents think that these issues have delayed more than 40 percent of the projects.



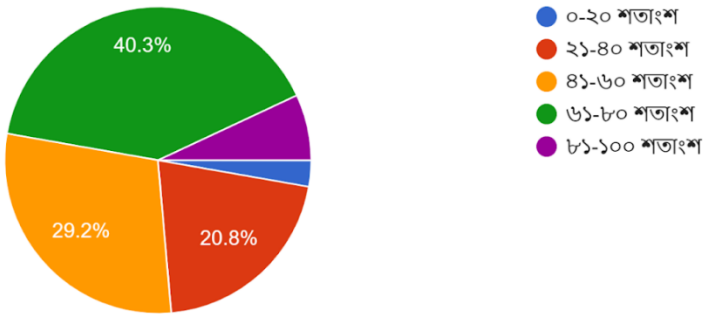
ix. Delay in recruiting PD, project staff, frequent transfer of PDs delay implementation.

২.১১.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) প্রকল্প পরিচালক নিয়োগে বিলম্ব; একজন কর্মকর্তা একাধিক প্রকল্পের প্রকল্প পরিচালকের দায়িত্ব পালন, ঘন ঘন প্রকল্প পরিচালক পরিবর্তন করা ইত্যাদির ফলে প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নে দীর্ঘসূত্রিতার সৃষ্টি হয়।
74 responses



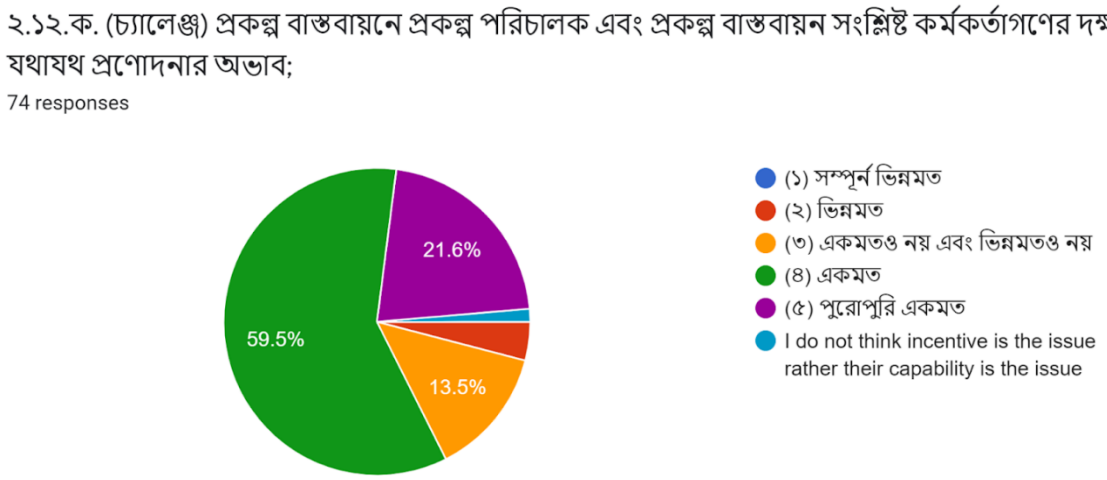
More than 90 percent of the respondents agreed that recruitment of PDs and project staffs and frequent transfer of PDs delay implementation of projects, including 28 percent of fully agreed respondents. More than three-fourths of the respondents think that more than 40 percent of the projects experienced delay due to late recruitment of PDs and project staff as well as frequent transfer of PDs.

২.১১.খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পে প্রকল্প পরিচালক নিয়োগে বিলম্ব; একজন কর্মকর্তা একাধিক প্রকল্পের প্রকল্প পরিচালকের দায়...দির ফলে প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নে দীর্ঘসূত্রিতার সৃষ্টি হয়।
72 responses

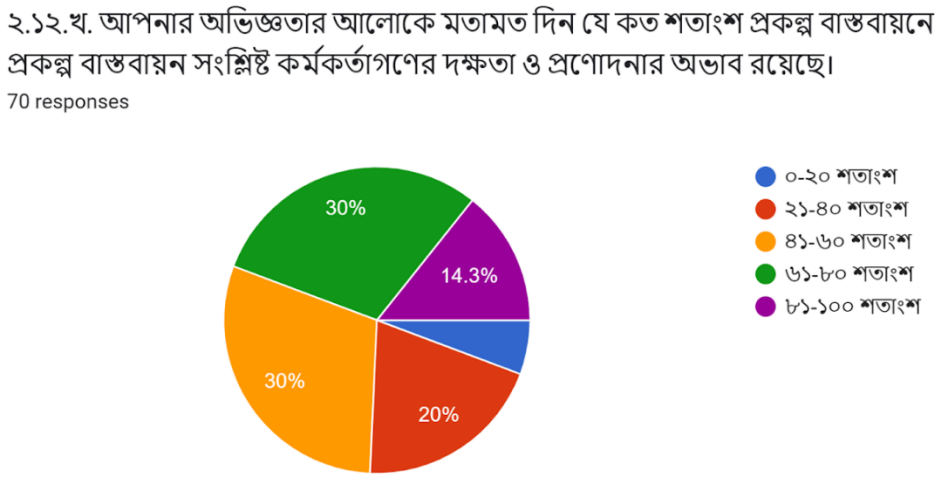


x. The PDs and project staff lack adequate skills in project implementation and there is also a lack of incentives to perform.

About 22 percent of the respondents fully agreed and 60 percent agreed that inadequate skills of the project staffs and lack of incentives lead to delay in project implementation. There is a comment which suggests that incentives are not problems, the problems lie in capabilities of the staffs.



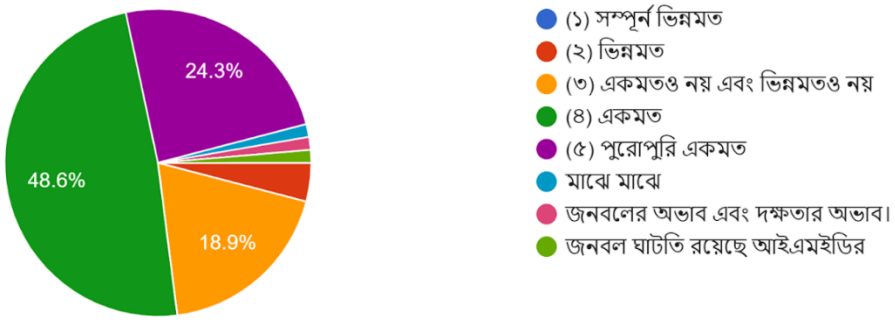
About three-fourths of the respondents think that more than 40 percent of the projects had such challenges of inadequate skills and incentives.



xi. IMED lacks capacity and efficiency in monitoring and evaluation.

২.১৪.ক. (চ্যালেঞ্জ) প্রকল্পের বাস্তবায়ন কার্যক্রম পরিবীক্ষণ ও মূল্যায়নে আইএমইডরি সক্ষমতার ঘাটতি রয়েছে।

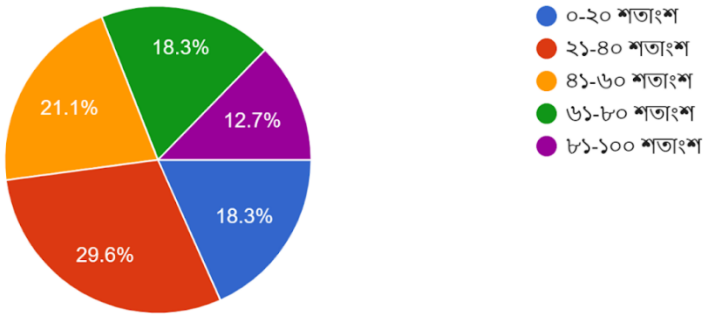
74 responses



IMED has capacity constraints and this is evident from the responses of the government officials and this causes delay in project implementation. About one-fourth of the respondents fully agreed that IMED lacks adequate capacity and efficiency to monitor and evaluate the implementation of projects. About half of the respondents also agreed with the statement. There is a comment that IMED is under staffed. About half of the respondents think that more than 40 percent of the projects were delayed due to lack of adequate capacity of the IMED.

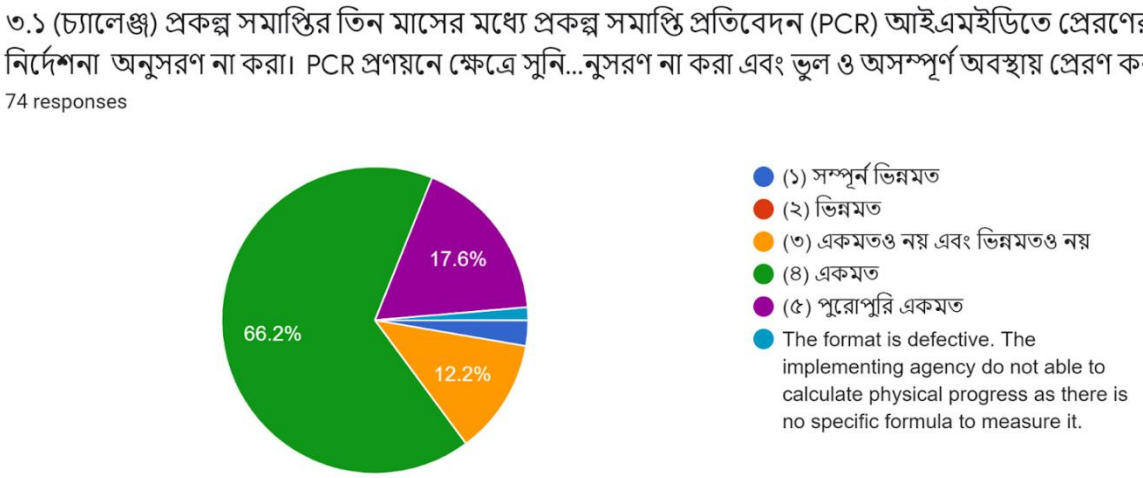
২.১৪.খ. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে মতামত দিন যে কত শতাংশ প্রকল্পের বাস্তবায়ন আইএমইডরি সক্ষমতার ঘাটতির কারণে বিলম্বিত হয়।

71 responses



Post-implementation stage

i. Projects are closed hastily without sending project closing report (PCR) to IMED or sending a weak report of little use.



More than three-fourths of the respondents agreed and fully agreed that projects do not send their PCR within three months of the project closing. Sometimes incomplete and wrong reports are sent to IMED.

5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this section we investigate further the reason and consequences of poor ADP implementation. A number of pertinent issues have been considered to categorize the reasons for improper project implementation. Every project has unique characteristic and owned by different agencies and handled by diverse personnel. So, problems are heterogeneous in nature. However some problems are common and are mentioned below. The section below draws heavily from Ahmed Saleh (2010).

5.1 Pre project stage

5.1.1 Delay in submission of project document:

Procrastination in preparing and submitting project documents is a major problem. That is why it is essential to track a project when it is at its incubation. Project implementation authority (mainly different agencies) takes long time to prepare and submit this for initial scrutiny to the ministries and forwards to Planning Commission for approval.

5.1.1 Improper preparation of DPP and need to modify even in initial stage:

In planning procedure there are certain guidelines to prepare a DPP. The technical, economic, financial, social and institutional aspects are to be taken care of this stage. In many cases all these issues are not considered for initial project preparation due to lack of adequate understanding, lack of competencies and pressures from vested groups.

5.1.2 Absence of all sorts of risk management issues in DPP

Risks and their management are not properly addressed. For example, hazards detecting, designing early warning and dissemination system, emergency communication and response management, mainstreaming, Incident Command System (ICS), environmental, land, and water resources management, flood monitoring using Radar Satellite Imagery, integrated water resources management are the risk issue. If such risks are not adequately addressed, this is likely to delay the project implementation..

5.1.3 Delay in project approval

On time approval of project is critical for timely completion of the projects. If we consider project approval process starting from DPP received from Agency to ECNEC / Planning Minister for approval the stage are as follows: Agency (Implementation Authority) – Sponsoring Ministry – Agency – Sponsoring Ministry – Finance Ministry - Sponsoring Ministry – Agency – Sponsoring Ministry – Planning Commission – Sponsoring Ministry – Agency – Sponsoring Ministry – Planning Commission for Approval (ECNEC / Planning Ministry. Due to procedure in approving the DPP, which often sees multiple revisions, projects cannot start on time.

5.2 Resources for project

5.2.1 Inadequate Release and Delayed Release of Fund:

Adequate funds are not allocated in many projects. For proper implementation of a project requires smooth and timely flow of required fund. Due to some procedural complexities, fund releases are also hampered.

5.2.2 Delay in Lining up / Allocation and Reimbursement of Foreign Aid:

Pipeline for project aid is often jammed and it takes time to release the funds, causing delay in project commencement and implementation. Sometimes, various clauses for using PA are not well taken care of before signing the contracts. There are also delays in agreements. Due to political instability, disasters and economic rescissions donors might delay to provide fund

and sometimes there might be delay in procedure of disbursement and official technical problem project may hamper.

5.2.3 Misappropriation of Fund by the Agency:

Sometimes misuse of the fund and devaluation of the local currency might result into misappropriation of fund by the Agency.

5.2.4 Shortage of Workers and Skill Workers:

Human resource planning is a critical component for project management. Project Information Office (PIO) has a critical role here. All the member of PIO team should have clear idea and basic knowledge of all the works, activities and component of the project. But due to lack of technical knowledge and skills on some of the sophisticated items, activities and works of the project, implementation of the projects suffers greatly.

5.2.5 Shortage of Building Materials:

Sometimes shortage of building materials, lack of quality materials and delay in import process might affect the project implementation.

5.3 Problems during Implementation:

5.3.1 Delay in Procurement:

Procurement is the most critical part in any project implementation. This requires to follow a strict set of rules which also delays the process. Delay in procurement processing and completion of contract performance results into two-fold economic loss and sufferings of the mass people (i) increase in the project cost, and (ii) increase in the loss to national economy in term of economic return of the project.

5.3.2 Delay in Customs Clearance:

Delay in custom clearance of the equipment and materials sometimes poses a major problem of the project implementation.

5.3.3 Complexities of Land Acquisition and Site Selection:

Land acquisition is a complex process involving many agencies of the government. However, it is a critical factor in project implementations because without getting the land construction works cannot start. In Land acquisition legal procedures are involved. Deputy

Commissioners and the Ministry of land may be directed to give priority to acquisition of land necessary for development projects.

5.3.4 Inability to Utilize Released Fund:

Procedural complexity is a problem for project implementation which sometimes leads to inability to utilize funds. In the project usually there is a member in the technical committee for purchasing materials; several times the tender committee had to be suspended for the absence of the member. Conducting meeting by maintaining all the procedures and formalities were a problem in this case. That affects flow of project implementation process.

5.3.5 Lack of Supervision and Control by Agency:

Regular supervision especially in the construction works is necessary for quality assurance and proper implementation of the project. In fact PIO, there was no proper supervision of the construction done by PWD which creates lot of quality problems in proper implementation of the project and many problem may create in future also.

5.3.6 Lack of Coordination and Cooperation among Departments:

Implementation of large projects involve coordination among a number of agencies. Hence it is important to have a coordination plan. To execute and implement the plan is a strong and proper coordination mechanism must be practiced to move all the concern parties in a coordinated way to implement the work plan of the project. But no such coordination mechanism has been found in the project activities.

5.3.7 Revision of Project Content:

Revision delays projects and there are cases where revisions could have been avoided. One of the reasons of inherent shortcoming is that project formulation is often done on the basis of out dated information, data etc. During execution of the project particularly which has relatively longest gestation period considerable changes occur in the projected scenario. As a result the project cost may significantly rise, additional work procurement may be required design/technology may need considerable change.

5.3.8 Delay in Design Approval

There are delays in getting architectural design and structural design in project implementation. Concerned PWD engineers are responsible for design work and sometimes they are over-burdened with works. There are also lack of efficient and skilled architects and structural designers in the PWD.

5.4 Result base Achievement of Project

Result based project evaluation is an important yardstick to measure the success of a public project. In general sense project is a plan, design, or a scheme for doing something to create 'public value'. Without considering outcome, it's a faulty evaluation for project.

5.5 Weak institutional and technical capacity to monitor the implementation

There is a consensus among the practitioners that the lack of institutional capacity is a major cause of delays in project implementation. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Department (IMED) of the Planning Ministry which is the entity responsible to monitor implementation of public projects does not have the needed human and financial resources, laboratory facilities, training infrastructure for professional development to properly and efficiently perform its duties. Quality of monitoring work and accountability in the implementation process suffer because of these weaknesses. The capability of relevant institutions, particularly the IMED, must be expanded to address the attendant challenges through allocation of the required resources.

5.6 Challenges regarding external funded projects

In case of projects involving foreign funds, negotiations are time-consuming and pre-project initiatives including feasibility studies and land acquisition work are not well sequenced, leading to delays in getting the projects off the ground speedily.

5.7 Challenges related to integrity

Corruption and use of influence and discretionary powers in selection of implementing contractors and in the course of implementation also affect the quality of projects and the deliverables from the projects. Procurement anomalies, syndication and an absence of results based monitoring undermine the cause of good governance in implementing public infrastructure projects.

6 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMANDATIONS

ADP implementation and role of government in enhancing economic development has become synonymous in context of Bangladesh. Inefficient use of public money has a huge welfare cost is likely to worsen the welfare of the country. Failure in completing development projects in time and within budget has for long impacted the economy as delayed implementation adds

to project costs. The size of the ADP has increased geometrically and so has the challenges. These challenges need to be addressed for efficient management of the projects and thus for the overall economic development.

There are some factors which may improve the efficiency of the process for proper implementation of ADP in Bangladesh. Section five of this paper has identified the challenges and also highlighted the proposed measure to be undertaken to improve the situation. Some of those are briefly mentioned below:

- ADP implementation should be proper and there may have less flexibility of revision of ADP. Some projects are national priorities and it may implement under ADP in block allocation without disturbing the main ADP.
- To ensure value addition for people most of the projects must attain outcome instead of output. Only socially acceptable, economically feasible and environmentally sustainable project can ensure the 'value for people'. So, starting from inception of a project must maintain social acceptability criteria.
- Approval of the project should be in due time and proper preparation of DPP and need to modify even in initial stage is utmost necessary.
- Release of fund in time, adequate allocation of fund and in lining up / allocation and reimbursement of foreign aid should be the high priority of the initial stage of the project.
- All sorts of building materials, land, power supply, procurement, customs clearance and other utilities should be ensured at the time of implementation of the project.
- Proper and timely decision and supervision and control by agency, coordination and cooperation
- among departments should be monitor in time and proper way.
- Strengthening the Planning wing of the Administrative Ministries is almost urgent for success of any project. Compulsory feasibility study is needed for large social sectors projects also. Involvement of representatives of local people in project selection and stopping of misuse of project vehicles and equipment from within and outside should be closely monitored. Use of project implementation techniques by the project management should be enhanced and to realize the cost of the projects from the beneficiaries' point of view is really essential to observed.

- Timely recruitment and training of manpower of a project to strengthening of the ERD with combination of relaxation of rules/ regulations should be ensured. Appointment of a full time Project Director right from the project preparation stage is always to be required.

The initiatives undertaken by concerned authorities in recent times in the areas of release of funds, land acquisition, retention of project directors and public procurement must be continued and further strengthened. Last but not the least, the IMED's institutional capacities must be expanded adequately, through adequate allocation of needed resources for it to be able to undertake its mandated tasks.

Disclaimer: The report is being updated and edited continuously…

7 References

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Al-Momani AH. Construction delay: a quantitative analysis. International Journal of Project Management 2000;18 (1):51–9.

Ahmed Saleh (2010), Problems of ADP Implementation in Bangladesh: An Analytical Review. An unpublished Masters' Dissertation Submitted to the Institute of Governance Studies BRAC University, Dhaka

To be updated

Appendix

Regression Results

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	1,557
				F(42, 1514)	=	7.16
Model	243982.426	42	5809.10537	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	1228182.84	1,514	811.2172	R-squared	=	0.1657
				Adj R-squared	=	0.1426
Total	1472165.27	1,556	946.121637	Root MSE	=	28.482

progress	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
ministry						
1	24.87757	15.66844	1.59	0.113	-5.856569	55.61172
2	14.06359	29.22179	0.48	0.630	-43.25589	71.38306
3	11.93104	21.1732	0.56	0.573	-29.60087	53.46294
4	32.34173	12.59301	2.57	0.010	7.640144	57.04332
5	-4.435799	12.00407	-0.37	0.712	-27.98218	19.11058
6	-17.2696	8.350821	-2.07	0.039	-33.65	-.8891924
7	15.55349	14.31569	1.09	0.277	-12.5272	43.63419
8	.0310396	13.33786	0.00	0.998	-26.1316	26.19368
9	10.28918	7.61588	1.35	0.177	-4.64961	25.22798
10	-3.298382	21.1732	-0.16	0.876	-44.83029	38.23352
11	27.2119	13.33786	2.04	0.042	1.049261	53.37454
12	18.41027	12.59301	1.46	0.144	-6.291312	43.11186
13	-5.559118	6.757746	-0.82	0.411	-18.81465	7.696419
14	-24.67072	7.111367	-3.47	0.001	-38.6199	-10.72155
15	15.32591	11.12733	1.38	0.169	-6.500692	37.15252
16	-4.206029	9.664198	-0.44	0.663	-23.16266	14.75061
17	-2.840652	8.668583	-0.33	0.743	-19.84436	14.16305
18	-10.69787	10.25168	-1.04	0.297	-30.80687	9.411131
19	-16.09174	8.076475	-1.99	0.047	-31.93401	-.2494741
20	-13.10347	7.719845	-1.70	0.090	-28.24619	2.039254
21	13.45372	14.31569	0.94	0.347	-14.62698	41.53441
22	35.02449	12.59301	2.78	0.005	10.3229	59.72608
23	6.657118	9.24074	0.72	0.471	-11.46889	24.78313
24	4.57411	7.719845	0.59	0.554	-10.56861	19.71683
25	37.83176	10.50224	3.60	0.000	17.23128	58.43225
26	3.925441	7.145537	0.55	0.583	-10.09076	17.94164
27	8.936603	11.52523	0.78	0.438	-13.6705	31.54371
28	26.67386	10.03194	2.66	0.008	6.995899	46.35183
29	-2.537864	9.664198	-0.26	0.793	-21.4945	16.41877
30	1.924128	10.50224	0.18	0.855	-18.67636	22.52461
31	-17.36866	8.528817	-2.04	0.042	-34.09821	-.6391128
32	15.05113	7.655185	1.97	0.049	.0352339	30.06702
33	10.5282	8.202316	1.28	0.199	-5.560906	26.61731
34	-5.404665	7.024597	-0.77	0.442	-19.18364	8.374308
35	-1.501647	8.74622	-0.17	0.864	-18.65764	15.65434
36	-3.897851	8.668583	-0.45	0.653	-20.90155	13.10585
37	13.46592	9.24074	1.46	0.145	-4.660086	31.59193
39	-5.480203	8.158123	-0.67	0.502	-21.48262	10.52222
40	-18.08716	6.863267	-2.64	0.008	-31.54968	-4.62464
41	11.35338	8.668583	1.31	0.190	-5.650321	28.35709
42	-6.590693	7.22	-0.91	0.361	-20.75295	7.571569
43	14.66509	10.03194	1.46	0.144	-5.01287	34.34306
_cons	27.44923	6.53419	4.20	0.000	14.63221	40.26626