



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

**Collaborating for Change:
Building a Brighter Future
Together**



Business Initiative Leading
Development

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2. Message From Chairperson **Nihad Kabir**

The whole of 2023 was crammed with a number of activities of BUILD- a voice of the private sector through its public private dialogue(PPD) structure. Throughout the year BUILD was engaged in organizing Dialogues, Advocacy and Research and having meetings with the high government officials and private sector leaders to implement its core mandate to extend policy support to the private sector to give them relief to face regulatory complexity and bureaucracy.

BUILD celebrated its 12th anniversary in 2023, I am proud to share our achievements and ongoing work as a leader in the public-private dialogue in Bangladesh. Over the past years, BUILD has continued to demonstrate its commitment to fostering private



sector growth and promoting policy reforms essential for the country's economic resilience. This dedication is especially vital as Bangladesh prepares for its post-LDC (Least Developed Country) transition, a period that will bring both challenges and new opportunities.

BUILD's mission has always been rooted in creating a collaborative space where government bodies and businesses can address shared priorities, exchange ideas, and work together to overcome obstacles. This approach allows us to develop practical, sustainable policies that support a more resilient and competitive private sector. Through ongoing dialogue and research-driven advocacy, we strive to ensure that both public and private sectors are aligned in the journey toward a stronger economic future for Bangladesh.

BUILD's impact in 2023 was characterized by targeted projects and strategic partnerships. Our involvement with the National Logistics Development Coordination Committee (NLDDC) marked a significant step toward establishing a cohesive logistics policy. As a core member, BUILD contributed to developing a time-bound action plan focused on modernizing and enhancing logistics infrastructure. This aligns with our ongoing commitment to overcoming logistical challenges that limit private sector expansion.

Similarly, through the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC), BUILD played a pivotal role in proposing actionable policy reforms in trade license simplification, duty-free imports, and export diversification. Our research-driven policy papers, presented to the PSDPCC, continue to push forward necessary changes to create a simplified, inclusive business environment that encourages growth and competitiveness.

In collaboration with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), BUILD completed the present phase of the Textile Competitiveness Platform (TCP) this year, aimed at fortifying the textile sector, a cornerstone of our economy. Through the TCP, BUILD seeks to promote sustainable growth in the industry, emphasizing resilience, efficiency, and international competitiveness. BUILD is preparing to implement its new phase of TCP with the help of some other partners and have a close discussion in that respect.

BUILD's advocacy efforts extended beyond our borders in 2023, with participation in various international conferences, strengthening our presence as Bangladesh's voice on the global stage. By engaging with organizations like the World Bank, ADB, IFC, and USAID, we have continued to ensure that Bangladesh remains informed by and integrated into global best practices. Our direct engagement with key government agencies, including the Prime Minister's Office,

2. Message From Chairperson **Nihad Kabir**

Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh Bank, and BIDA, has further strengthened BUILD's role as a trusted advisor and advocate for impactful and sustainable policy changes. By fostering close connections with these agencies, we have supported essential reforms that address current economic needs and anticipate future challenges. BUILD's collaborative efforts, particularly as Bangladesh transitions from its LDC status, have focused on ensuring that policies not only support private sector growth but also bolster the economy's resilience in a competitive global market.

BUILD signed MoU with BIDA this year for initiating more closer joint activities for preparing Business Licensing Guidebook-a branded publication of BUILD is in its 6th version and also some investment promotion activities, policy research and reforms. BUILD also signed a MoU with C3ER of BRAC University for collaboration for activities in the climate change and supporting SMEs in that respect.

Through targeted workshops, seminars, and ongoing public-private dialogues, BUILD has equipped both businesses and policymakers with the practical knowledge and tools they need to create lasting, positive change. This capacity-building focus has empowered stakeholders across sectors, allowing them to actively participate in the policy reform process and ensuring that their insights and experiences play a vital role in shaping effective, future-proofed policies.

To date, BUILD has proposed 1,073 specific policy reforms, addressing areas such as tax, SMEs, financial sector development, trade, investment, sustainability, logistics, and more. Out of these, 615 recommendations were approved, and 433 have already been implemented. These milestones reflect BUILD's commitment to meaningful impact, providing businesses with a simplified, conducive environment to grow and innovate. From advancing the National Logistics Development Policy, BUILD has worked tirelessly to address pressing needs and build a foundation for future growth.

With Bangladesh's impending graduation to developing country status, BUILD remains resolute in our mission. We are committed to guiding the private sector toward a future where it can thrive independently of preferential treatments, by advocating for reforms that create a robust, competitive, and inclusive economy.

In accomplishing all these activities, BUILD was not alone and has got full support from its Trustee Board led by three prime chambers in the country, they are DCCI, MCCI and CCCI. I on behalf of the Trustee Board wish to extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated team at BUILD led by its CEO, wish to extend sincere thanks to our partners, stakeholders and all others whom have silently supported BUILD. Through all of your kind and sincere supports, we have made significant strides in 2023, and I am confident that BUILD will continue to serve as a catalyzer for change in future and sustaining competition in future for a prosperous Bangladesh.

Nihad Kabir
Chairperson, BUILD

14 October, 2024

1. OVERVIEWING OF ACTIVITIES OF BUILD

BUILD is gaining momentum and experience in its activities with the passing of time. In its 12th year of establishment, it was also engaged with a number of private sector development activities through its mandate of research, dialogue, and advocacy. I feel happy and would like to acknowledge its core activities towards facilitating the private sector for attracting new business addressing constraints of investments.

The year 2023 was a busy year for BUILD similar to the earlier years and the organization had progressed as a unique public-private dialogue (PPD) platform having confidence to the government and the private sector in handling regulatory reforms.

The country is in transition and going to be graduated to a developing country by the year 2026 which is a prestigious moment for the country. However, it needs to ensure responsibilities along with other developing countries. As a developing country, Bangladesh is going to lose a number of duty exemptions that might translate into a loss of \$7 billion from export earnings per year which will be around 14.3% of our export earnings. Bangladesh will also lose the duty-free market access to several key export destinations. Though the country will enjoy benefits until 2029, but at this critical juncture, the country needs appropriate policies that will ensure smooth LDC graduation. This 2023 annual report contains the complete course of BUILD's prowess as the sole public-private dialogue platform in Bangladesh and its commitment to continue diversity in different arena of policy and advocacy that bridges the gap between the public sector and private sector in Bangladesh to carry on the trend of holistic development in the country.

The first meeting of NLDCC was held on 2 February 2023 under the chairmanship of Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to HPM, where BUILD trustee board members led by Nihad Kabir, Chairperson of BUILD, graced the session. In the meeting, Chairperson BUILD expressed gratitude to PMO for formulating the NLDCC to keep the momentum raised by public and private sector stakeholders to ensure comprehensive development of the logistics ecosystem in Bangladesh.

On 13 April 2023, the second meeting of the NLDCC was held at the PMO. In the meeting CEO of BUILD, suggested forming a time-bound action plan for all sub-committees to implement responsibilities assigned through the TOR. She thanked Principal Secretary to HPM for including BUILD and LIDWC in the sub-committee of NLDCC. She expressed candidness to extend all the possible research and secretarial support to attain the objectives of NLDCC.

BUILD along with PMO, organized the 14th PSDPCC meeting on 14 August 2023 at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). In the meeting, it was revealed that, out of 72 proposed reforms from the fifth to eleventh PSDPCC meetings, 37 reforms were implemented. BUILD also presented three policy papers on the simplification of the issuing and renewal process of trade licenses, the simplification of the duty-free import process of raw materials for partial exporters, and the implementation of the work plan elaborated in relevant policies and export roadmaps to facilitate export diversification. The presentation also highlighted the necessity of creating an awareness campaign so that the issuers of trade licenses can issue licences for five years.

BUILD along with the World Bank Group participated in the workshop titled "Reviewing Regulatory Framework of Different Countries to Formulate National Logistics Development Policy of Bangladesh" held by the PMO on 20 August 2023 at Parjatan Bhaban. In the workshop, the study of the logistics regulatory framework of 13 countries was presented. BUILD vowed to continue to give comprehensive research assistance, secretarial services, and robust advocacy support to the PMO to develop an effective logistics framework in Bangladesh. BUILD also underscored the necessity of formulating a time-bound action plan. On 5 August 2023, BUILD handed over the report of this workshop to the PMO.

BUILD also joined the Investment Attraction Sub-Committee Meeting of NLDCC at PMO on 12 June 2023. In the meeting, BUILD informed about the policy gaps and policy constraints in the ICD, off docks, CFS, C&F, freight forwarding, etc., sectors that narrow the investment inflow in Bangladesh. BUILD also stressed the need to assess short, medium, and long-term investment needs of the overall logistics sector in consultation with public and private sector stakeholders and setting annual investment targets.

Another workshop on “Logistics Service Sub-sectors and its Policy Relevance under National Industrial Policy-2022” was organized by the NLDCC, PMO, the World Bank and BUILD at the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation on 7 September 2023. This workshop helped to figure out the loopholes under the 21 sub-sectors of the logistics industry in Bangladesh and was effective in figuring the way out to find the remedies.

On 18 October 2023, at a workshop on discussing measures for boosting the country’s performance in the Logistics Performance Index (LPI), BUILD termed the logistics sector as the backbone of any thriving economy and highlighted the crucial role of logistics in Bangladesh’s economic aspirations. Moreover, the need to move up in the LPI ranking was underscored to enhance trade competitiveness and attract foreign investment.

In February 2023, BUILD at a meeting with NBR at NBR office submitted its budget proposal that mainly focused on the government’s consideration of deducted at source as the final settlement of tax and ensuing the TDS refund facilities to all industrial sectors. BUILD proposed limiting tax officials’ discretionary authority. It also proposed lowering VAT on small and micro businesses and integrating VAT return form 9.1 in the VAT automation system. It proposed enhancing customs capacity to meet WTO regulations to achieve LDC targets, as well as providing a bond facility for partial importers. BUILD also urged that tax policy and tax administration be separated.

BUILD organized a seminar at its office on 27th November 2023, to consult with the stakeholders before the finalization of the recently passed Income Tax Act 2023. In the presentation, BUILD presented several gaps in the act like no provision was included for the extension of tax return submissions after the expiration of the set timeframe. There is no option for submitting applications to the tax administration, either from individual taxpayers or corporations. Moreover, many people are not aware of the act although it is closely related to their income and life. Even international communities are not aware of this act, which may affect the inflow of foreign direct investment.

On 8 January 2023 BUILD paid a courtesy call at the BIDA office where BUILD and BIDA vowed to work together to ensure a conducive environment for local business a move which will ultimately boost foreign investment in Bangladesh. BUILD also highlighted policy reforms in repatriation regarding the ease of doing business.

On 13 February 2023 at BGMEA a meeting among Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), and International Finance Corporation (IFC) took place intending to launch the Textile Competitiveness Platform (TCP).

On 5 March 2023 at the InterContinental Hotel, BUILD and the USAID-funded Feed, the Future Bangladesh Trade Activity, jointly launched the “5th Business Confidence Survey Report 2022”. The survey portrayed some noteworthy recoveries of the business activities that are indications of reviving of business confidence in the country. In this survey 567 business entities were covered across Bangladesh which analyzed the business conditions of Bangladesh from March to August of 2022 and figured out the possible ways to create a conducive environment for business in the country for the next six months. In the event, BUILD expressed its commitment to continue to work for the private sector development and continue to give policy suggestions to the public sector.

17 April 2023 at BIDA Conference Room, BUILD and BIDA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that aimed at attracting investment along with simplifying the investment process based on mutual technical assistance and ensuring an up-to-date investment environment. Through this MOU, BUILD and BIDA will establish a professional network, strengthen cooperation and enable information exchanges, and conduct research and policy advocacy between the two organizations to facilitate a transparent, predictive, and conducive investment environment in Bangladesh.

On 30 July 2023, BUILD organized a dialogue on the Monetary Policy Statement (MPS) and Containing Inflationary Pressure in Bangladesh at the BUILD Conference Room. In the dialogue, BUILD highlighted the challenges of MPS and interest rate corridor and focused on ways for addressing inflation through different tools of the central bank. BUILD also presented different factors relating to inflation in Bangladesh.

On an introductory meeting on 10th April 2023 which was held virtually to prepare the sixth edition of the Business Start-Up Licences: A Regulatory Guide. It will be prepared by BUILD BUILD, in collaboration with Feed the Future Trade Activity. It has target to document 400 trade and business-related licences. Incorporating a “process map” in the guide will help in easy understanding of the process and speed up the licensing process.

On 15 March 2023 at a local Hotel in Dhaka, SHE Trade Initiatives of ITC Geneva organised a programme on Mainstreaming Gender in Trade Policy. In the programme, BUILD informed that gender issues have been highlighted and even separate Chapters are included in different national plans and policies of Bangladesh. The government also introduced several online support services to ease business. Given these, WEs must improve their capacities and access to the Policy Dialogue supported by research with updated information and examples.

On Thursday, 22 September 2023, at the Conference Room of BHTPA, BUILD in a meeting with the MD of BHTPA, BUILD proposed discourse on the readiness for using industrial robots in Bangladeshi industries/factories and the obstacles and potential regarding this issue.

BUILD paid a courtesy call to Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi on 26 January 2023 at the Ministry of Commerce where the BUILD chairperson expressed gratitude to the commerce minister on extending the tenure of Import Registration Certificate (IRC) and Export Registration Certificate (ERC) from one year to five years. In the meeting, BUILD requested for full-scale automation of RJSC services. Moreover, proposal was made to remove the provision of a minimum BDT 25 lakh paid-up capital for single proprietor companies and also to remove the provision of a commercial address while applying for trade license.

On 18 May 2023, A meeting between Bangladesh Bank and BUILD was held where the BUILD team inquired about the details of the Export Facilitation Pre-Finance Fund (EFPF) scheme that will replace the Export Development Fund (EDF) where the exporters will avail funds at relatively lower interest rates. On the same day, BUILD held a meeting with the Chief Economist of the Bangladesh Bank to discuss the interest rate corridor and the current economic situation of the country.

On 18 June 2023, a meeting between BUILD and BIDA took place where a review of the status of the process of updating and publishing the 6th Business Start-up Licences Regulatory Guide and worked out a plan of action related to the joint activities of BIDA and BUILD based on the MoU signed by both organisations signed on 17 April 2023 was discussed. the Business Licensing Book prepared by BUILD is the most comprehensive and easily comprehensible ‘one-stop information source’ on business licensing and other regulatory requirements in comparison to that of any government agency as it covers licences registrations, approvals, certificates, permits and recommendations related to trading, investment, foreign investment, import, export, security and standard, chemical and explosives and sectoral business and so on.

At the invitation of Ministry of Commerce on 26 November 2023, BUILD team briefed them on the study undertaken by BUILD that focuses on the implications of the UK’s Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) on Bangladesh’s trade with the UK and how the private sector and the policymakers of Bangladesh are responding to the UK’s recently announced scheme. Moreover, shifting to manmade fibre was emphasized by BUILD.

On 18 October 2023, at a workshop on discussing measures for boosting the country’s performance in the Logistics Performance Index (LPI), BUILD termed the logistics sector as the backbone of any thriving economy and highlighted the crucial role of logistics in Bangladesh’s economic aspirations. Moreover, the need to move up in the LPI ranking was underscored to enhance trade competitiveness and attract foreign investment.

On 17 September 2023 on the workshop of Development of Investment Policy Workshop supported by the ADB at BIDA, BUILD emphasized on shaping of the investment policy that will be a collaborative effort, drawing upon the collective insights of foreign investors, the private sector, and policymakers.

On 13 February 2023, a meeting between BUILD and IFC was held in the Conference room of BUILD. The main objective of this meeting was to discuss planned private sector engagements that IFC is designing in Bangladesh with BUILD. The discussion focused on designing IFC's new private sector development programme and setting up a women entrepreneurs' leadership circle. BUILD organized a meeting with the Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley, on 18 January 2023 at BUILD conference room. In the meeting, the EU Ambassador emphasized creating EuroCham in Bangladesh which will help strengthen the well-established relationship with the EU as it is Bangladesh's largest trading partner, and European companies are interested in exploring investment opportunities.

At the UNCC Fashion Policy Dialogue held on 27 February 2023 at Sheraton Dhaka, BUILD presented in the second session on "Identifying the Right Financial Incentives to Suppliers" to finance renewable energy for the suppliers. In the presentation, urge was made to grant the authority to the banks and other financial institutions to determine their annual targets for the disbursement of green financing and that this should take place after an annual analysis of the demand had been prepared. It was suggested to recognize financial institutions for their excellent green performance based on different financial metrics.

BUILD CEO participated in the Preparatory Meeting of the Japan-Bangladesh Economic Dialogue on 16 February 2023 at the PMO. In the dialogue, she pointed out that Bangladesh's logistics sector has more than 19 sub-sectors, and the government is highly enthusiastic about attracting FDI, JV, and local investment in these sectors. She also emphasized the need to advance the effort to formulate the subject of signing an FTA between Japan and Bangladesh.

BUILD Chairperson Joined the LDC5 Conference in Qatar which took place from 5th to 9th March 2023. At the conference, BUILD Chairperson met with the private sector, civil society, parliamentarians, and young people to advance new ideas, raise new pledges of support, and spur delivery on agreed commitments through the Doha Program of Action (DPoA).

On 30 March 2023, BUILD Chairperson participated with the Bangladeshi delegation in Brussels, Belgium to discuss the issue of Bangladesh's preparedness to continue its growth momentum in the post-LDC era. The Bangladesh delegation also urged the EU to waive its safeguard textile threshold criteria or redesign the mechanism for Bangladesh in the proposed GSP scheme for 2024-2034 so that the country could benefit from GSP Plus after the LDC graduation.

BUILD CEO participated as a special guest on the USAID-supported FtF Trade Activity's 'Easy Export Series' where she appreciated the USAID's initiative in the FtFTA and will help growers and exporters of Bangladesh understand the food safety requirements, which will enhance their export potential.

On 10 May 2023, the BUILD Trustee Board joined a call on with the World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan Abdoulaye Seck. The meeting focused on discussing policy advocacy and research areas, especially private sector development, infrastructure for logistics integration, increasing business efficiency, and export diversification.

On 3 May 2023, BUILD Chairperson met the ADB Bangladesh Country Director to discuss comprehensive and holistic reforms to create a conducive environment for the private sector.

On 17 May 2023, BUILD organized the first Textile Competitiveness Platform (TCP) meeting with support from the IFC-led Partnership for Cleaner Textile Programme (PaCT).

On 18 July 2023, a meeting took place between representatives from BUILD and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Bangladesh at the ADB BRM. BUILD's Chairperson emphasised BUILD's part in the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee, advocating business and investment policy reform. Conducting public-private dialogues across seven thematic areas, co-chaired by relevant entities, BUILD addresses obstacles to Bangladesh's graduation to a developing country by 2026. BUILD CEO discussed BUILD's policy-related activities in the logistics sector, emphasizing collaboration with the PMO.

A Call-on Meeting between USAID & BUILD was held on December 28, 2023, at the USAID office. In the meeting, the CEO of BUILD delivered a concise presentation on the organization and its primary initiatives aimed at fostering private sector development. She outlined BUILD's objectives, highlighted the formation of seven working committees, and touched upon the activities of the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC). The CEO also shed light on collaborative endeavors with Trade Activity, USAID, including the 5th Business Confidence Survey and the 6th Business Start-up License Guide.

On 19 June 2023, BUILD organized its 4th meeting of the Logistics Infrastructure Development Working Committee (LIDWC) at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). In this meeting the action plan for the year 2023-24 was placed to reduce the cost of logistics in Bangladesh and conduct research and surveys as per requirement. This committee vowed to work extensively in coordination with the National Logistics Development Coordination Committee (NLDCC) formed in the PMO and its five sub-committees. BUILD also proposed that LIDWC will form a structured and strong network among the stakeholders to have the inputs from private to private and private to government through consultation, trade logistics tool kit and logistics index formulation, identification of demand and priority selection of private sector, coordination among trade logistics and trade facilitation initiatives, facilitate the NLDCC, sub-committees, and PMO through research, technical and secretarial support.

The 4th Sustainability and Green Growth Working Committee (SGGWC) meeting took place on 21 May 2023 at the MOEFCC Conference Room. In this meeting, BUILD presented under the following title 'De-carbonisation and Circularity for the Sustainability of the Clothing Sector in Bangladesh.'. The presentation highlighted the importance of recycling the 400,000 tonnes of RMG waste in Bangladesh which has the potential to create a business of more than \$4 billion. Besides, the challenges associated with circularity in Bangladesh were portrayed in the presentation. Moreover, BUILD urged to give duty exemption to the solar cell developers in Bangladesh and underscored the need to expand and simplify the testing process of solar power components at the import stage. This presentation also emphasized formulating clear guidelines for rooftop solar in Bangladesh.

The fourth meeting of the 4IR&ICT Working Committee was held on 24 July 2023 at Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA). A keynote presentation on "Potential of Assembling of Industrial Robots for Different Industrial Sectors of Bangladesh" was presented at the meeting which highlighted the potential associated with social and economic impacts of robot assembling, including job displacement, skills development, and ethical considerations portraying some comparative scenarios of other countries. Moreover, to harness the opportunities of 4IR for industrialization responsibly and inclusively, the benefits and challenges of using robots for different industries in Bangladesh were presented.

The 10th Trade and Investment Working Committee of BUILD was held on 3 December 2023 where two policy papers titled "DFQF Market Access to China-Policies and Measures to Increase and Diversify Exports" and "UK's DCTS: Policy Measures to Escalate Export to the UK" were presented. It was jointly organized by the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and BUILD. In this meeting, the progress report on the implementation of eight out of 27 proposed reforms by BUILD, with nine currently in progress, was highlighted. In the policy paper presented on 'DFQF Market Access to China', some potential sectors were identified to avail the DFQF market opportunities in the Chinese market. This study found that of 137 items exported to China, 98% of them are excluded from the DFQF list. This presentation emphasized China's demand for prime and fashion-oriented products which are not adequate on our export basket. China is keen on importing primary products from Bangladesh, an opportunity that can be tapped by encouraging investment-led exports.

In the presentation of the UK's DCTS, emphasis was given to the DCTS on the post-graduation period as this scheme is more liberal than that of the GSP+ scheme of the EU. This study identified several products that have immense potential in the EU export market under the DCTS scheme. This study also highlighted the challenges and standard and certification issues, social audits, and at the same time, attracting FDIs and developing infrastructure for increasing export to the UK market. It recommended for updated fair calendar including potential countries, investing in R&D for high-value-added products following income tax policy as allowable expenses.

BUILD organized its 11th Financial Sector Development Working Committee (FSDWC) Meeting virtually on November 22, 2023. In this meeting, two presentations were presented. One on Export Facilitation Pre-Financing Facility (EFPP) that highlighted a comparative scenario of EDF and EFPP and constraints faced by the exporters in case of enjoying EFPP. In this presentation, a recommendation was made to raise the ceiling of EFPP based on the current sectoral demand of Tk. 30,000 crore (USD 2.75 billion) with proper monitoring of BB from which loans will be given to pay back-to-back LC payments. Moreover, a recommendation for online-based application services for the EFPP for proper disbursement, availability of this fund for partial exporters, a safeguard measures for exchange rate fluctuation, alignment for using bonded facilities was proposed. On the second presentation titled as “MPS HI24 Targets and Achievements”, focused on improving the investment scenario. On this presentation, BUILD presented several strong recommendations to tackle inflation and ensure a smooth flow of forex reserves in the country. This presentation also highlighted the Bank Company Act 2023 (Amended) and recommendations regarding bringing good governance in the banking sector were proposed.

On its 8th SMESPD Working Committee Meeting on 16 January 2023, BUILD advocated to promote the light engineering sector for its development which will require some targeted actions. The meeting was held at the Ministry of Industries, and it was organized by BUILD.

In total, BUILD has until 2023, proposed 1073 reforms of which 615 got approved and 433 got implemented.

3. Brief on BUILD

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) is the country's pioneering public-private dialogue platform jointly promoted by the three leading chambers of the country — DCCI, MCCI, and CCCI.

Established in 2011, BUILD is uniquely positioned to provide research-driven policy recommendations to the government on behalf of the private sector. Since its inception, BUILD has played essential roles in the public-private policy dialogue process by identifying investment, trade and business constraints and recommending policy-level changes to help unlock many growth potentials for the private sector and the economy.

BUILD conducts additional research to develop policy recommendations for private sector-led development. It works as a strategic partner of the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and provides all secretarial support through Policy Coordination Unit (PCU) at the PMO. The Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) is a high-powered public-private sector committee chaired by the Principal Secretary of the government.

BUILD currently contributes through seven thematic public-private dialogue (PPD) platforms focused on taxation, SME, financial sector, logistics and infrastructure, trade and investments, ICT and 4IR, sustainability, and green growth. These PPDs create the bridge between policy planners and the private sector on a regular basis working towards deeper engagement of the stakeholder dialogue and discussion process for improving policies. Each of the PPDs is headed jointly by the senior public and private sector representatives.

BUILD is working in association with the World Bank to form the country's first-ever National Logistics Policy which is supervised under the PMO. With this end in view, the draft of the National Logistics Policy has been prepared and the policy is set to be finalized in 2024.

Given the ever-changing needs, these engagement platforms between the public and private sectors create a deeper understanding of the improved planning process and policy design for the economy. BUILD's recommendations from PPDs are forwarded to the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC). PSDPCC provides guidance and direction on the various recommendations.

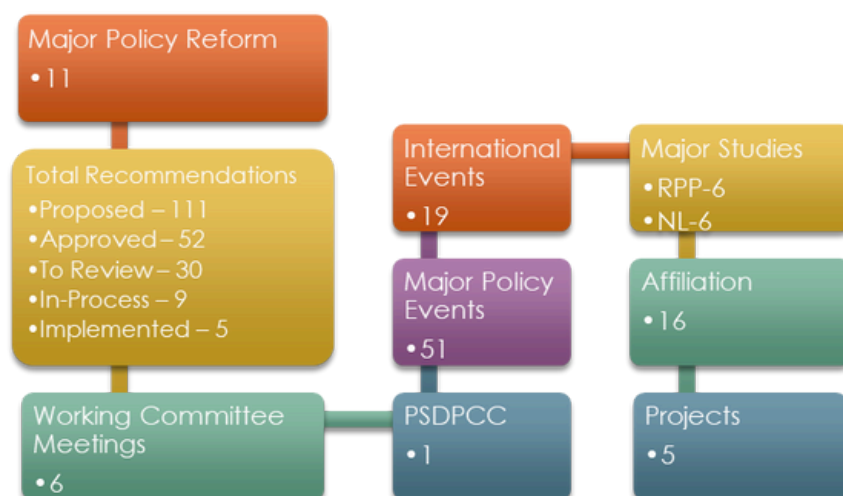


Figure 1: BUILD Reforms and activities snapshot 2023

3.1. Board of Trustees



Ms. Nihad Kabir

Member, Trustee Board &
Chairperson, BUILD



Mr. Mahbubul Alam

Member, Trustee Board,
BUILD & President, FBCCI



Mr. Abul Kasem Khan

Nominated Trustee Board
Member & former Chairperson,
BUILD



Mr. Md. Saiful Islam

Member, Trustee Board, &
President, MCCI



Mr. Omar Hazzaz

Member, Trustee Board,
BUILD & President, CCCI



**Mr. Syed
Mohammad Tanvir**

Trustee Board Member &
Director, CCCI



Mr. Afsarul Arifeen

Member, Trustee Board, BUILD
& Secretary General, DCCI



Mr. Engr. Mohd. Farque

Member, Trustee Board, BUILD
& Secretary In Charge, CCCI



Mr. Farooq Ahmed

Member, Trustee Board, BUILD &
Secretary General, MCCI



Ms. Ferdaus Ara Begum

CEO of BUILD, Trustee Board
Member by invitation & Member
Secretary

3.2. PSDPCC and Working Committees

BUILD is a strategic partner of the Prime Minister's Office's (PMO) Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC). BUILD participates via seven thematic public-private dialogue (PPD) platforms focusing on taxes, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the financial sector, logistics and infrastructure, trade and investments, ICT and 4IR, sustainability, and green development. BUILD engages with PSDPCC via these seven themes' working committees, much like a flower with seven petals.

Working Committees are as follows:

Table 1: Brief overview of TWC Activities in competitiveness for manufacturing and export oriented sector

Sl	Name of the Thematic Working Committees (TWC)	Activities for competitiveness	Manufacturing and Export-oriented sectors
1	Trade & Investment Working Committee Co -Chaired by Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, GoB & President, MCCI	A specific TOR regulates the committee activities. It works with office/agencies under the Ministry such as; Bangladesh Tariff Commission, RJSC, Bangladesh Tea Board, BFTI, EPB, Business Promotion Council, ICMA, ICAB etc. Deals with Export, Import and other relevant policies	Priority sectors in the export policy Leather and leather goods, Electrical and electronics, Plastic etc. Analysis of Export trends of different sectors and different countries. Publishes articles and editorials.
2	SME Development Working Committee Co-chaired by the Secretary Ministry of Industries, GoB and President, CCCI	A specific TOR has been maintained. Through this Ministry BUILD has opportunity to work with office/agencies under this Ministry such as; BSTI, BITAC, DPDT, Boiler office, SMEF, BAB, BSEC, BSCIC etc. It deals with SME Policy 2019, Industrial Policy 2016, 2022 and other related policies of the Ministry	High priority and Priority sectors of the Industrial policy, SME sectors etc., Women Entrepreneurship development, SME sectors, and new entrepreneurship development.
3	Financial Sector Development Working Committee Co-chaired by the Deputy Governor, Bangladesh Bank and President DCCI	Similar to other thematic committees, this working committee has specific TOR. It also deals with monetary policy, investment facility, financial system, CSR policies, economic indicators, economic trends etc. In respect of policies it deals with Foreign Exchange Policy, policies announced through different BB Circulars etc.	Banks, NBFIs, SME, Export and Import, Bond Market, SME Financing, Export incentives, Stimulus packages, repatriations policies etc.

4	<p>Taxation Working Committee</p> <p>Co-chaired by Chairman, NBR and President FBCCI</p>	<p>Identifying the existing tax policy anomalies, Issues/ Analysis of VAT & SD Act, Income Tax Policy & Customs tax and related policies.</p> <p>Custom tariff rationalization, customs modernization and electronic payment system etc.</p>	<p>Placing research-based reform recommendation to WC and Budget proposals for strengthening competitiveness of manufacturing sector. Analyze data to identifying the business trends.</p>
5	<p>Sustainability and Green Growth Working Committee</p> <p>Co-Chaired by Secretary, MOEFCC & President BGMEA</p>	<p>The committee also works very closely with DOE, Climate Change issues under a specific TOR.</p> <p>The committee is working with EPR, ECA rules and SDGs and Renewable energy policies for sustainability in the textile and RMG Sector.</p>	<p>Manufacturing sector such as; Plastic, packaging products, leather and leather goods etc. Pollution control and environmentally supportive manufacturing sector development. Green transformation fund, and textile sustainability,</p>
6	<p>4IR & ICT Working Committee</p> <p>Co-chaired by Secretary High Tec Park Authority and President BASIS</p>	<p>Working for harnessing the benefits of 4IR and ICT for Bangladesh economy in terms of expediting growth and creating new employment opportunities through close cooperation among public and private sector on relevant policies and practices (Focus on SDG 4, Target 4.4 and SDG 8, Target 8.2).</p>	<p>Simplification of policies for technology adaptation and up gradation in the concerned manufacturing sector.</p>
7	<p>Logistics Infrastructure Development Working Committee</p> <p>Co-chaired by Secretary, PMO and Chairperson, BUILD</p>	<p>The committee is working for Logistics sector development so that business can be vibrant and targeted goal for economic development can be achieved. Manufacturing sector can achieve the growth targets announced by the Perspective Plan 2021-2041.</p>	<p>Simplification and reform in policies to extend logistics support facilities to the private sector. Support for preparing Logistics Policy 2024.</p>

Figure 2 : The Structure of the Working Committees at BUILD

Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) is the only strategic public sector platform for private sector-related policy review, coordination, identification of investment barriers and fostering public-private cooperation. The committee is chaired by the Principal Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office. This committee has a membership of all Secretaries involved in trade and business with a provision of co-option of other members as and when necessary.

3.3. Brief on PSDPCC

PSDPCC has been established as per a Government Notification no 03.068.022.03.00.24.2011-377 on 12 September 2011 by the Prime Minister's Office. Objectives of the committee involve; Improving enabled policy environment for private sector development; Achieving the strategic goals as determined in SFYP for Private Sector Development; Helping to create an investment-friendly environment to attract more FDI; Coordinating both public and private sectors for better business; Reviewing the progress of implementation of PSD reforms to identify roadblocks to execution and devise strategies to overcome roadblocks.

The committee has been formed to review all related activities for private sector development initiated by both the public and private sectors and make recommendations; to review the overall investment scenario in the private sector and set out ways to improve it; identify bottlenecks in private sector development and set out recommendations with a view to removing all bottlenecks, and to recommend actions for building cooperation between public and private sectors with a view to private sector development.

BUILD is a vehicle to convey research-backed inputs and policy suggestions from the private sector as a government's strategic partner. BUILD acts under planned reform architecture. Through this reform architecture, the WCs under BUILD, with support from the BUILD Secretariat, act as the core partners and Secretariat of the PSDPCC where complex inter-ministerial issues are raised and resolved alongside recommendations proposed by BUILD. So far, BUILD has organised 13 PSDPCC meetings and one review Meeting under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary of PMO. PMO also supports BUILD and organises review meetings inviting Co-Chairs of the Working Committees for stock-taking exercises on the implementation status of the already approved recommendations.

A number of reform policy papers have been presented to the PSDPCC, where they have been considered, and numerous reform ideas have been adopted as a result of these sessions.

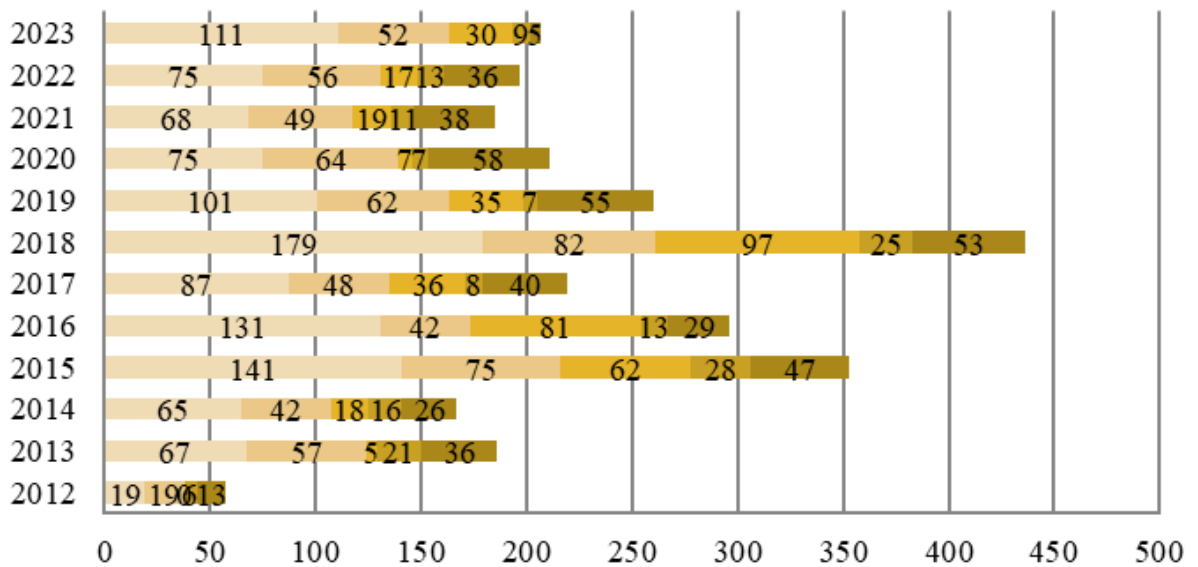
Secretarial Support of the PSDPCC:

A Policy Coordination Unit (PCU) has been established on 13 September 2011 at the PMO comprising of important officials of PMO, Director General-I and Director- to provide support services to PSDPCC BUILD has been providing all secretarial services and working very closely with PMO. It is recognized as the primary source of Information, and a strategic partner of the PSDPCC established at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) working since 2011. In addition, the Prime Minister's Office has published a gazette on 1st January 2020 (03.068.022 2015/onsho.3/13) and engaged BUILD as the Secretariat and for providing research to the PSDPCC

3.4. BUILD's Commitment to Results

The scorecard for BUILD's reform efforts from 2012 to 2023 is portrayed in the diagram below:

BUILD's Recommendations Status (2012-2023)



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Proposed/ Placed	19	67	65	141	131	87	179	101	75	68	75	111
Approved	19	57	42	75	42	48	82	62	64	49	56	52
To Review	0	5	18	62	81	36	97	35	7	19	17	30
In-process	6	21	16	28	13	8	25	7	7	11	13	9
Implemented	13	36	26	47	29	40	53	55	58	38	36	5

4. Major Policy Reforms in 2023

In its journey to inspire Bangladesh's business and investment climate, BUILD continues advocating for policy reforms by diligently coordinating productive dialogue.

4.1 Businesses are Now Obtaining/Renewing Trade License for Five Years

Trade License is the primary legally mandatory document for all business forms within the country's boundary. It is an area- or zone-based business permit issued by the local government of the respective areas and renewed yearly. The private sector, especially CSMEs, faces hurdles in obtaining and renewing this licence which hampers the ease of doing business. To address the concern of the businesses, BUILD conducted a study on Trade Licence issuance, renewal, and other relevant issues to identify policy and procedural constraints. To facilitate the private sector and improve the business environment, BUILD recommended a set of policy and process-related proposals to the concerned authorities based on the study's findings.

BUILD presented the study along with recommendations in its 9th Trade and Investment Working committee (T&IWC) meeting held on 28 September 2022, headed by the Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce (MOC) and President Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI). All the recommendations were endorsed by the meeting.

As a member of the Working Group of the Bangladesh Investment Climate Improvement Programme (BICI) of BIDA, BUILD also sent proposals to BIDA for improving the business environment. Based on the recommendation proposed by BUILD, BIDA sent a letter to Local Government Division (LGD) on 18th July 2022 for issuing/renew Trade Licences for a maximum of 5 years and developing a unified/prescribed Application Form for Trade Licence, Unified Trade Licence format and Checklist.

In reference to the above advocacies, City Corporation Wing-1, LGD issued a letter on October 12, 2022, with a directive to the concerned to take necessary action for issuing/renewing Trade Licences for 5 years in all City Corporations.

City Corporation Wing-1, LGD also issued a letter on 24 January 2023, with a directive to the concerned (city corporations/municipalities/union parishads) to issue Trade Licence following the unified/prescribed application form for Trade Licence, Unified Trade Licence format and Checklist prepared by LGD.

4.2 Formation of National Logistics Development and Coordination Committee

To have a high-powered national committee led by the Prime Minister's Office to ensure coordination among the stakeholders of the logistics sector as well as to have sustainable growth of this sector, both the public and private sector leaders raised their voices in that regard to the workshop entitled "formulation National Logistics Industry Development Policy for Bangladesh: Experience from Global Good Practice" which was organised by BUILD with support from the Ministry of Industries and the World Bank Group on 16-17 November 2022.

Regarding BUILD's advocacy and research assistance, Prime Minister's Office formed the National Logistics Development and Coordination Committee (NLDDC) under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary of the HPM. NLDDC aims to attain national growth targets, improve trade and investment competitiveness, and efficient freight transport and service to make a holistic and comprehensive impact in the logistics sector of Bangladesh. In that regard, an official gazette notification was published on 25 January 2023 (03.10.2690.882.018.00122-15).

The first meeting of this national committee was held on 2 January 2023 at PMO. BUILD proposed extending possible research and secretarial support to the committee through the Logistics Infrastructure Development Working Committee.

4.3 Jute is Under Agricultural Products

BUILD presented a Policy Paper on the Simplification of Policies for Diversified Jute Products (DJP) in its 5th Meeting of the Trade and Investment Development Working Committee (T&IWC) of BUILD held on 3 May 2016. One of the recommendations was to Issue a circular/SRO to formalise the jute sector as an agricultural sector, and the circular terms and conditions should be spelt out. The study and recommendation were further placed at the 9th Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) meeting held on 28 August 2017, chaired by Principal Secretary to the PM.

In regard to the proposal, BUILD followed up with these recommendations to all corresponding channels through the PSDPCC meeting. Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also declared the jute sector as an agricultural sector in the cabinet meeting. On 1 March 2023, a gazette was published under the Ministry of Agriculture announcing golden fibre jute as an agricultural product. Now Jute will avail all the benefits allowed for agricultural products.

4.4 Boiler Act-2022 Enacted

As a pivotal component of various industries, the demand for boilers in Bangladesh has been on the rise, driven by the country's burgeoning industrial growth. Although locally manufactured boilers have gained popularity due to the assurance of robust after-sales services, they have encountered fierce competition from low-cost imported counterparts, often compromised in terms of quality. Additionally, the absence of clear policy guidelines has been a longstanding challenge, causing setbacks for local boiler manufacturers.

To suggest policy simplification measures for boiler manufacturing Companies and reduce administrative hassles, BUILD conducted a study on 'Simplification of Boiler Manufacturing in Bangladesh'. BUILD placed a set of recommendations in its 4th SME Development Working Committee on June 4, 2015, and 8th Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) on January 16, 2016, encompassed vital changes. These included recommendations for an update of the Boiler Act 1923 & Rules, strengthening the Boiler Board, procedural simplification for issuing licenses for Boiler manufacturers, improving IT Infrastructure, and increasing manpower among others.

Recognizing the pressing need to amend the longstanding Boiler Act of 1923, the Government of Bangladesh took decisive action and introduced the Boiler Act of 2022. Furthermore, 95 officers have been appointed out of the 122 newly created positions within the Office of Chief Boiler Inspector, with the remaining appointments currently underway. These far-reaching reforms have significantly streamlined the boiler manufacturing process in Bangladesh, resulting in a notable boost to this sector.

4.5 Technical up-gradation of the GCF Country Programme in ERD

UN Wing of ERD, in collaboration with FAO and IWM, organised a workshop titled "The Technical Up-Gradation of the GCF Country Programme" on March 30 at NEC-2, Planning Commission, Dhaka.

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum was present in the workshop. The programme's objectives are to assess the current Bangladesh Country Programme (2018) and its overall performance and undertake an updated country programme investment pipeline to leverage public and private investments in climate adaptation and mitigation priorities in Bangladesh. It is seen that Bangladesh has received seven projects so far from GCF, the value of which is USD 375 million. GCF globally funded USD 45 billion for 216 projects. India (USD 528 million) and Indonesia (USD 296.4 million) are the primary beneficiaries.

Five important groups were formed in the workshop. Initially, several ideas of projects emerged for proposing funding from GCF, keeping planned mitigation actions in updated NDC and maintaining the NAP code through accredited entities. Workshop participants will propose concept notes proposing lead and supporting organisations. BUILD proposed two specific projects for preparing concept notes.

4.6 Budget 2023-24

For the 2023-24 Budget, BUILD has provided NBR with several reform suggestions. Several of them have been put into practice in the following ways.

A provision has been included in the VAT and SD Act 2012 for issuing a specific prior notice to the VAT payers before intervening by imposing a penalty. In the Finance Bill 2023 (Section 21, page 16), the provision “Separate prior notice for hearing before imposing penalty” has been included. The tax authority would need to issue prior notice before taking action. This provision will be helpful for businesses to be prepared so that they can avoid penalties.

The income tax exemption threshold has been increased to BDT 3.5 lakh from 3 lakhs. On the other hand, the income tax-free threshold for women and other privileged groups (third gender, freedom fighter, person with disability) has also been increased in Finance Bill 2023 (Tafsil 2, Page 70).

4.7 Policy for 21 Sub-Sectors under the Logistics Sector

In recognition of the Logistics sector's significance in the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Industries, Business Initiative Leading Development, and World Bank along with the representatives of public and private sector stakeholders, started a journey in 2020 under the umbrella of the 'Logistics Infrastructure Development Working Committee (LIDWC)' with the hope to provide research and advocacy assistance to establish Bangladesh as the modern multimodal regional logistics hub to link the businesses of the country with the world.

To realize the importance of the logistics sector for the country, Bangladesh is formulating the National Logistics Policy. Twenty-one logistics service sub-sectors have already been included in the National Industrial Policy 2022. BUILD is working to identify the sectoral constraints, existing policies, problems, and remedies to boost and sustain the sectors. Under this purview, BUILD arranged a workshop on Logistics Service Sub-sectors and their Policy relevance under National Industrial Policy-2022 on 7 September 2023.

4.8 Bangladesh Bank Extended New Re-finance Scheme for Small Women Entrepreneurs

A recent SMESPD circular letter no-6 by the Bangladesh Bank on June 25, 2023 re-named the Small Enterprise Re-finance Scheme to Small Enterprise Refinance Scheme for Women Entrepreneurs and increased the amount of the scheme from Taka 1,500 crore to Taka 3,000 crore. This is a highly commendable step.

The circular also mentioned that disbursed loans/ incentives against investment announced for women entrepreneurs on August 17, 2021 (SMESPD Circular no-08) and June 20, 2022 (SMESPD Circular no-02) on the same issue will remain unchanged.

This initiative is in line with the Bangladesh government's commitment to empowering women by developing small entrepreneurship.

BUILD has been working for CSMES to identify their barriers to getting finance, conducting research on CSMEs, facilitating dialogues between CSMEs and the public sector raising their concerns and recommendations at the Working Committee on SME Development, and finally advocating policies, regulations, and practices to the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) at PMO.

The Deputy Governor of Bangladesh Bank is the co-chair of the Financial Sector Development Working Committee (FSDWC) as well as a member of PSDPCC. BUILD has a MOU with the Bangladesh Bank which works to formulate policies and regulatory framework to promote a conducive environment for private businesses, including for women entrepreneurs.

BUILD appreciates the initiative of Bangladesh Bank and would be happy if the fund is properly utilized by the small women entrepreneurs and in this respect, BUILD will continue its ongoing efforts.

4.9 RJSC Website Updated with Procedural Simplification Details

RJSC is implementing various procedural simplifications and reforms in its continuous efforts to disseminate information on the Automated Memorandum of Association (MoA) and Articles of Association (AoA). Additionally, the organisation has developed a video highlighting RJSC services and crafted multiple tutorials demonstrating its clients' use of the new business registration software. Circulars and relevant information have been published on both the official website and RJSC's Facebook page (facebook.com/DigitalRJSC). It has also introduced a fee calculator on its website to facilitate the calculation of registration fees for all types of companies.

BUILD conducted a study followed by a survey titled "Improved Business Environment and Simplification of Company Registration Process" and presented it at the 9th Trade and Investment Working Committee meeting on 28 September 2022. This meeting, co-chaired by the Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and the President of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, served as a platform for discussing and implementing proposals outlined in the study. All the recommendations were also presented in a meeting of RJSC on 22 October 2022, presided by Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce.

4.10 CPTU Enacts Comprehensive Reforms

Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) Policy 2023 was published on 10 December 2023 by the Implementation Monitoring Evaluation Division (IMED), Central Procurement Unit (CPTU) of the Planning Commission, GoB. The gazette is in Bangla (www.dpp.gov.bd/bgpress/index.php/document/extraordinary_gazettes_monthly/2023-12-07). BUILD worked closely with CPTU for the policy in collaboration with ITC, Geneva.

4.11 Reforms Implemented by CPTU

In response to BUILD's recommendations, the Sustainable Public Procurement Policy 2023 by Central Procurement Unit (CPTU) has implemented significant reforms outlined in Clauses 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 on pages 27629 and 27633 of the documents. These reforms are designed to foster broader participation and enhance the success of Women-Owned Enterprises (WOEs) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in public procurement processes.

Moreover, to promote extended participation of WOE and SMEs, various measures have been introduced. These include minimize the complexity of tender documentation, divide contracts into smaller lots, limit the number of lots that will be awarded to one bidder, allow more time for submission of expression of interest (EoI) and tender can be awarded as per approval of appropriate authority.

An additional recommendation is incorporated in Annex 2 (page 27633, para 4), where the policy outlines the routine monitoring of two essential core indices for strategic entrepreneurship evaluation:

- a) participation of women entrepreneurs in the public procurement.
- b) determination of the number of government organizations based on the standard of sustainable public procurement as per the relevant agreement.

5. Recommendations by BUILD

Multiple constructive and far-reaching improvements were recommended by BUILD in 2023.

5.1 4th meeting of 4IRICT

- Implementation of Industrial Policy decision (Time-bound Action Plan, Chapter 21, clause-13(para 16.2)). Implementing organizations are MoI, BIDA, BHTPA, BSCIC, Trade & Industry organization. Investment and FDI attraction in this sector (Clause 13, para 16.6) can help access to better technology and management.
- A survey to assess the demand for the type of robots businesses are willing to accept. Phase-wise survey needs to be conducted for the important and potential sectors. Robotics Strategy 2020 needs to be updated. Feasibility studies are required to understand the potentials of backward and forward linkage development with small industries to understand the potential of new job creation.
- Tax Holiday is allowed for Automation & robotics design, and manufacturing including parts & components thereof (Clause 26 under xxx), similar benefits can be announced for this sector.
- Education programs and skill development infrastructure need to be initiated to deliver talent for innovation.
- Use of Robots in risky operations like firefighting, manhole cleaning and other risky operations may be emphasized so that this type of industry be capable to be developed.
- Technical Assistance for R&D Development, IPR issue has to be ensured.
- In the EPZ, Robotics Assembling should get a priority.
- University-academia collaboration for R&D for 4IR technologies and automation.
- Collaboration with the countries in Asia is required who are doing good in this sector.

5.2 8th Meeting of SMEDWC

- A list of Light engineering products and their sub-sectors can be prepared and circulated, a definition of Intermediate goods can be incorporated in the policy, support the light engineering industry, One Stop Service (OSS) for the light engineering sector can also be put into operation by BSCIC, a common E-commerce platform for light engineering products can be established so that light engineering entrepreneurs can interact with national and international customers.
- BEOIA will provide a concept paper to MOI about the demands of light engineering entrepreneurs regarding infrastructural development focusing on probable land price at BSCIC industrial estate, utility services, bonded warehouse facilities, soft loans, or interest-free loans to promote Made in Bangladesh Brand and to facilitate SMEs to adopt innovation and diversify light engineering products aligning with implementation of SMART Bangladesh.
- The Subcontracting Act shall be finalized on an urgent basis to facilitate the forward and backward linkage industry.
- For institutional Development, bilateral and regional collaboration needs to be strengthened to understand and bridge standard/quality gaps. To establish a common facility center, MOC and EPB can be added to the action plan to work with BSCIC and BITAC.
- A study to cope with the new situation after LDC Graduation can be done with the support of UNIDO.
- MOI-BSCIC-SME Foundation-BPC can work together to accommodate 4IR Technology & AI in light engineering sector. A metal research lab can be instituted with the help of BUET.
- Bangladesh Bank can extend the scope of Green Industry to help LE Sectors SMEs to improve their compliance on becoming a green industry. A special circular for financing cottage and micro-entrepreneurs can also be announced along with CMSME Schemes. A common platform for access to finance for the light engineering sector can be established by Bangladesh Bank where all information will be available to potential entrepreneurs.
- NBR may issue separate circulars to reduce duty on imported raw materials.
- Telegraphic Transfer (TT) Systems like RMG can be extended to light engineering SMEs to encourage export.
- BSCIC and SME Foundation will initiate more effective and time-bound re-skilling and up-skilling programs based on local needs. Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP) project can support relevant organizations and associations to extend their service.

5.3 National Budget 2023-24 Proposal

- Prior Notice for VAT payer: It was proposed to include "a provision under VAT & SD Act 2012 for Issuing a specific prior notice to the VAT payers before intervening by imposing penalty" In the finance Bill 2023 (Section 21, page:16) has inserted the provision "Sperate prior notice for hearing before imposing penalty" has been included. The tax authority would need to issue prior notice before taking action in this regard.
- Income tax exemption Threshold: has been increased to BDT 3.5 lakh from 3 lakh. On the other hand, the income tax-free threshold for women and another Privileged group (Third gender, Freedom fighter, person with disability) has also been increased in finance bill 2023 (Tafsil:2, Page: 70)

5.4 10th T&IWC Meeting

DFQF Market Access to China- Policies & Measures to Increase & Diversify Export:

- Product/sector-specific details strategy needs to be developed.
- A strong negotiation can be initiated to include products, those are not included in the DFQF list.
- A strong negotiation can be initiated to include 137 products especially products under HS code 62 (knit), 76 (aluminium), 41 (leather), 28 (misc. chemical), 44 (wood), 39 (plastics), 03 (crabs) those are not included in the DFQF list.
- More G2G discussion and action need to be taken to actively participate in fairs organized by China (exp: CIE Canton Fair).. Product selection for such fairs should be well-diversified.
- Proper market Assessment or research needs to be done by the private sector to understand the dynamics & key features of the Chinese market. R&D support needs to be extended.
- Investment from private sector to establish modern testing labs can be encouraged.
- Concerned Chambers from China and Bangladesh can do the required market Assessment and research for exploring benefits of DFQF and inform private sector.
- MoC and EPB to take necessary steps to increase participation in the international fair organizations.
- Infrastructural support for digital transactions and online cross-border marketing capacities needs to be developed.
- Private sector should work on establishing linkages with retailers in China for creating strong network.
- Bangladesh should start a feasibility study for signing a bilateral Free Trade Agreement/PTA with China to boost exports and investment. The feasibility study can be done jointly by the public & private sector.
- Bangladesh should start a feasibility study for signing a bilateral Free Trade Agreement/PTA with China to boost exports and investment. The feasibility study can be done jointly by the public & private sector.
- MOC can start a negotiation with China for an extension of LDC preferences.
- FDI, Chinese investments & Joint Ventures in the potential sectors, BIDA and the private sector can play an active role.
- The government may allow a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for Chinese investors.

UK'S DCTS Scheme: Policy Measures to Escalate the Export in the UK:

- Organize sectoral dialogues, especially with identified potential sectors, to disseminate the UK's DCTS benefits and other measures.
- Investment in Research and Development should be encouraged by the corporates with tax benefits to introduce new products in the unexplored markets and reduce dependency on RMG only.
- Private sector needs to be informed about important features of DCTS.
- MoC and EPB can call a meeting with the concerned organizations to understand the present situation on Social Audit certificate and extend support to the private sector.

5.5 11th FSDWC Meeting

On Export Financing & Export Facilitation Pre-Finance Fund (EFPF):

Increase the ceiling of EFPF based on the present demand of the sectors.

a. The fund can be raised to, Tk 30,000 crore (USD 2.75 billion) from which loans will be given to pay back- to-back LC payments. However, allocation should be augmented based on the demand and increase contribution to export.

b. EFPF Loan ceiling for RMG can be increased to at least BDT 300 crore from BDT 200 crore

c. EFPF for leather sector is seven (7) crores which could be equal to RMG.

- In the circular of EFPF (8(u)) stated that if an exporter avails a fund against an export L/C from any other fund of BB for a single consignment, he will not get the benefit of EFPF. Leather exporters have to take advantage of multiple export support pre-financing funds to execute large bulk orders from different buyers and brands within a short span of time. As the ceiling for this sector is very low so this provision of circular needs to be relaxed for leather sector.

- The demand for EFPF would naturally be lower compared to EDF because customer used to get loans in dollars and pay the cost of imports in dollars. But now if they get a loan from a bank in taka and then they have to buy dollars from another bank that incurred a cost of an additional 6% to 7%.

a. The interest rate on EFPF could be lower (present rate is 5%) to adjust this additional cost and as a financing to support Export.

- While one can directly apply online to take a loan from the EDF, online-based services have not yet been launched for the EFPF.

- Online-based services needs to be launched for the EFPF for proper disbursement.

- Export Proceed Realization (EPR) should not be looked into in a wholesale manner

a. EPR shortfall than the shipment value. It is said, exporters deliberately delay bringing export proceeds thinking that currency will devalue. BB has made a policy that no matter how many days after 180 days the export proceeds come, exporters will get the proceeds at the 180th days exchange rate. Because of declining export proceeds trade credit became \$ 3.6 billion in July-April, 2023 which was \$ 1.1 in the same period last year. On the other hand, while an exporter has made several Export proceeds, but for some reason one proceeds delayed, the wholesale policy is to stop all support facilities, this would be a difficult situation for the exporters.

b. There should be a case-by-case decision, based on the track record of exporters this decision would need to be changed.

- Managing Foreign Exchange Reserve Currency Basket for Maximizing its use

a. There is a need to look into the issues of alternatives of EDF, meaning extending funding support to the exporters in USDD. US Treasury Bond interest rate is now increased, if some proportion of the income be allowed for exporters could be helpful.

- EFPF for partial exporters

a. Whether partial exporters will be allowed to get EFPF can be look into.

- A safeguard measure should be included in the policy to make the effective use of EFPF fund.

a. Because of E/R volatility when the price of RM increased, exporters face problems.

- Bond Facilities by Deemed Exporters

a. For using Bond facilities USD is important. VAT & SD Act section: 2(62) defines Deemed Export where "Supply Against Foreign Exchange and Destined For Consumption Outside Bangladesh".

Monetary Policy Statement HI24 Targets and its Achievements – an Analysis

- Governance issue

1. BB has very rightly identified three important issues for addressing in the MPSH224, it shed light on the improvement of governance issues in the banks and financial markets. Unless other relevant parameters improve controlling inflation with the announced tool will be challenging, in that respect addressing NPL, rescheduling policies, and reducing import dependency are important.

2. Bank Companies Act 2023 amendment is an important step, it should be implemented, such as; willful defaulters, reducing family influences on bank boards, Central Banks Power to remove board of directors in the Banks, improve monitoring of BB on the subsidiaries formed by the Banks, prompt corrective actions etc.

3. Money laundering should be prevented by awarding exemplary punishment to the launderers.

4. Treasury Bills and Treasury Bonds

Primary Dealers have a great role to play, while maintaining and ensuring liquidity requirements, there are several relevant issues that need to be addressed otherwise maintaining the objectives of MPS to contain inflation would be difficult.

5. As the interest rate is linked with TB, which is not fully driven by the market rate, maintaining a market-based rate would be difficult. MPS can look into the issue. Close monitoring of IRC to contain inflation as a tool.

TB rate fixation auction process needs to be redesigned with a “Circuit Breaker”. It must address inflation and CAB, FAB indicators, specifically foreign exchange reserve.

- Monetary Policy and Fiscal Policy should be aligned.
- Monetary Policy should be aligned with fiscal policy. Budget deficit must be kept in mind while setting different targets and before introducing a new MPS.

The effectiveness of IRC in controlling inflation is questioned especially when fiscal measures are expansionary and government borrowing affects inflation.

- Improving Investment Scenarios
- Infrastructure and private sector development are interrelated. Without public sector development, private sector investment and growth will be stuck up. The cost of doing business should be reduced. The government could have filtered some projects that would save us and reduce the external pressures.
- Exchange Rate Calculations

a. In controlling the exchange rate, the management of BAFEDA and ABB has not been effective. So, the BB should control and monitor it with the help of BAFEDA and ABB. Moreover, the exchange rate gap in the Curb market should be reduced gradually.

IRC and its Impact

a. The spread rate needs to be reduced to 2% to attract investment-related loans by increasing the efficiencies of the Banks.

b. MPS has not given any SMART rate for deposits and some directives can be given in that respect.

c. MPS could give some directives to incentive packages of special fund loans and credit cards.

- Forced Merger for Salvaging Banking Sector is required.
- Non-Cash incentives for NRBs

a. Encouraging expatriates to send money via legal channel, 5% benefits would need to be circulated and benefits should be instant, some non-cash benefits like discounts on travelling, giving education and training facilities for children, health insurance on treatment etc. can be announced for the remitters.

5.6 4th Meeting of SGGWC

- Two sub-committees will be formed under the SGGWC: (1) Circular Economy and Recycling, and (2) Green Growth. These sub-committees will hold discussions on respective areas and report back to the SGGWC.
- Mr. Abdul Wadud Chowdhury, Deputy Secretary, MoEFFC, and Dr. Abdullah Al Mamun, Deputy Director, DoE have been nominated as the coordinators for the SGGWC so that the committee can play a more effective role in the public-private dialogue.
- UNIDO can be co-opted in the SGGWC as it is implementing projects on circularity. BUILD can work with UNIDO for the 5-year project they have initiated.
- Government can consider item-wise single use plastic ban following the international examples, instead of banning all single-use plastic. BSTI can engage plastic producers in the process of setting standards for recycled plastic, food related plastics, bio-degradable plastics, toys, etc.
- Standard for recycled PET has to be set, otherwise, producers will not be able to announce the percentage of recycled part in a plastic good.
- Shonali Bag or other alternatives to plastics can be introduced in the big markets and malls through MoEFFC's existing enforcement mechanism. The Ministry of Commerce and private sector stakeholders can help MoEFFC in this initiative.

- Government offices can publicize the new climate initiatives to the beneficiaries so that these can be more effective. BUILD, UNDP, and other organizations can participate in publicity initiatives to reach the ultimate beneficiaries.
- Though segregation is very important for plastic waste management, DNCC and DSCC have some concerns about segregation for waste to energy initiatives. MoEFCC's policy is in favor of segregation at source. To clarify this conflict and negotiate with city corporations, MoEFCC will collect the agreements already signed among city corporations, BPDB, and foreign companies to develop waste-based power plants. A dialogue can be organized to hear the opinions of all concerned. Clarification is required in the plastic roadmap in this regard.
- Facility can be established for managing hazardous waste like sludge, since we have rules and regulations for managing these wastes. Associations like FBCCI, BGMEA, and BKMEA, can come forward to support the factories interested in solid waste management.
- Bangladesh Bank can consider financing circular factories under the Green Transformation Fund so that our investors can get loan facilities to establish circular industry. MoEFCC can take the initiative to promote green, sustainable, and climate funds and finances available in Bangladesh Bank and elsewhere.
- MoEFCC can make a list of the environment-friendly factories and bad performers in environmental sustainability. UNDP can extend support to MOEFCC and BUILD in this respect.
- Businesses, especially the marginal businesses, have very little knowledge about these climate funds and finances. MoEFCC can send letters to chambers and associations to inform them about the available facilities. SME Foundation and other organizations can play a role here.
- The recommendations (Attached as Annex-B) made by the presentation of BUILD were discussed elaborately and a decision was taken to forward the decisions to the concerned organizations by the MOEFCC. BUILD also requested to earmark names of the concerned organization for implementation of the proposals for approval of the MOEFCC.

5.7 14th PSDPCC Meeting:

Streamlining the Process of Duty-Free Import of Raw Materials for Partial Exporters

- For the partial exporters, necessary provisions should be incorporated in the Customs Act 1969 (Chapter-11), Customs Act 2023 (passed but not in effect), Bonded Warehouse Licensing Rules 2008, Entitlement Policy 2008, and 100% Export Oriented Industries Temporary Importation Rule 1993 so that the partial exporters can utilize the bonded warehouse facilities by specific laws.
- If "Partial Export Industry" is added as a proviso to the Section- 4 of the Bonded Warehouse Licensing Rules 2008 on the memorandum 23.09.1997 issued by the Customs Division, the partial exporters will be able to use the bonded warehouse legally.
- The exporters who are not under the purview of partial export or bonded warehouse facilities should be subjected to a provision by the Customs Authority to get either UP or UD. The current provision requires the necessity of both.
- For the partial exporters, amendment is required in the specific laws which can be done by issuing an executive order. It can give the facility of using bond by Home Consumption.
- There should be a list of specific parent organizations of the products that will specify the relevant parent organization as per guidelines.
- In the D-6 portion of the application form of bonded warehouse license, "Partial Exporters' Bond" should be incorporated.
- For the small and partial exporters, a central/common bonded warehouse will be a long-term solution which can be directed by the Customs Bond Commissionerate and other relevant parent organizations on the basis of pre-demand of the partial exporters.
- Workplan implementation of relevant policies and export roadmap for export diversification:
- Roadmap workplan implementation for export diversification in leather and leather goods:
- For making the CETP fully functional and effective, the private sector wants BEPZA to be assigned with running the CETP.
- For solid waste management, vendors who are capable of providing technology can be hired from Europe.
-

- For financing, GCF and other international financing schemes can be utilized which can be incorporated in the country action plan by ERD.
- For R&D in exporting industries, circulars need to be issued to give financial assistance that should have guidelines on limit of annual turnover, cost estimation, and research work with academia.
- The Institute of Leather Engineering (ILET) of Dhaka University has successfully invented the technique of deriving by-products by solid waste management in chrome tanning. The private sector can commercialize it with the help from the public sector.
- The section 6.16.2 of the Export Policy 2021-24 encouraged sub-contracting-based export to establish a strong supply chain and backward linkage industry in export-oriented industry and like original export-oriented industries and the organizations linked to them should be made recipient of different incentives that need implementation.
- The leather goods and footwear factories need to be recognized as “Green” factories according to the Environment Protection Rules 2023.
- Bangladesh Bank can be requested to relax circulars on the Export Facilitation Pre-finance Scheme for the leather exporters as they require it for numerous bulk orders.
- Roadmap workplan implementation for export diversification in light engineering sector:
- It is imperative to set up a common facility centre to enhance the quality and standard of metals. In this case, the govt can start a pilot project.
- Fair price of land should be set up for the BSCIC Light Engineering Park in Munshiganj and infrastructure of the land should be improved.
- Finalizing and implementing the draft Sub-contracting Act 2022 will mitigate the multifaceted problems of this sector. Obligation of using 10% local products in the backward and forward linkage industry for its development should be incorporated in the act.
- At the import level, for drawback in the duties and taxes a new section should be incorporated in the VAT and Supplementary Duty Act 2012 under DEDO that will allow the payment directly using the banking channel.
- For the coordination between 4IR and AI in this sector, the MoI, BSCIC, SME Foundation and BPC can work together.
- Roadmap workplan implementation for export diversification in plastic sector:
- A plastic waste management policy and an Extended Producer Regulation (EPR) that should have a clear guideline on zero-waste action plan need to be enacted. A draft has been prepared.
- BSTI should formulate standards and policies to label the plastic grade, hazardous goods, and biodegradable substances for the plastic industry. BSTI has already started working with the standard reference of the EU Zone.
- Like PET bottles, there should be a specific engraving/embossing of other plastic products so that the goods prepared from virgin or recycled plastic could be identified separately.
- To expedite the development of the mould and dye-generating power plants located outside the EPZs, ten years tax holiday should be provided to them.
- Bonded warehouse facilities should be expanded to both export-oriented and non-export-oriented plastic industries that produce capital machinery, mould, and dye. It will encourage both local and foreign investment.
- To calculate the actual contribution of plastic industry in the country and to avert double counting, NBR, EPB AND Bangladesh Bank should combinedly work on separate documentation of direct and deemed exporters of plastic industry.

Other Sectors:

- For export diversification in the shipbuilding industry, there should be proper guidelines on the proper implementation of the Ship Building Policy 2021.

6. PSDPCC Meeting

The 14th Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) meeting took place at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on 14 August 2023 under the chairmanship of Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to the PMO. The meeting discussed several policies and regulatory simplification requirements for meeting export diversification targets in the national plans and export roadmaps. PSDPCC is the only strategic public sector platform for private sector-related policy review, coordination, identification of investment barriers, and fostering public-private cooperation.

Organised by the Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) and the PMO, the meeting initially took stock of the decisions of the 13th PSDPCC meeting and mentioned the reforms proposed and implemented. BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum made the keynote presentation, noting that out of 72 proposed reforms from the fifth to eleventh PSDPCC meetings, 37 reforms were implemented.

BUILD CEO presented three policy papers on the simplification of the issuing and renewal process of trade licences, the simplification of the duty-free import process of raw materials for partial exporters, and the implementation of the work plan elaborated in relevant policies and export roadmaps to facilitate export diversification. She informed the meeting that the Local Government Division has already been allowed to issue a trade licence with a tenure of 5 years. However, it is not fully implemented across the country, and she urged for an awareness campaign so that all trade licence issuers issue trade licences for five years.

Entrepreneurs are required to renew the trade licence by 30 September of each year, whatever the issuing date be, resulting in additional costs to businesses. She requested to change the policy so companies can renew their trade licence after five years from the date of issuance.

She further said that partial exporters are still not entitled to avail of bonded warehouse licences. Provisions should be included in the Customs Act 1969, new Customs Act 2023, Bonded Warehouse Licensing Rules 2008, Entitlement Policy 2008, etc., to facilitate the partial exporters with bonded warehouse licence facilities.

Implementing concerned clauses of export policies and policies for plastic, light engineering, and leather goods needs implementation to meet the export diversification targets.

While chairing the meeting, the Principal Secretary said that we would regularly review the overall investment scenario in the private sector and set out ways to improve and identify bottlenecks in private sector development to remove bottlenecks and build cooperation between public and private sectors. He instructed LGRD to investigate the issue of the trade licence so that the trade licence is renewed after five years.

The Principal Secretary requested the Ministry of Commerce to form a committee with the representatives of NBR, the Ministry of Finance, and the private sector to draft the Corporate Social Responsibilities Policy and to come up with the draft in two months.

Bottlenecks should be resolved in addressing the plastic industry's constraints in renewing trade licences in residential areas. He suggested that BSTI should come forward to formulate a labelling policy for plastic grades, dangerous and biodegradable items. He assured BUILD that he would get focal points from all agencies within seven days.

Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, said that the provision of corporate social responsibilities (CSR) will be well addressed in the upcoming Companies Act. A committee can be formed to investigate the issues of CSR, and the businesses not registered under the Companies Act can be regulated otherwise.

Secretary Ministry of Finance Fatima Yasmin informed that rooftop power producers are getting funding at relatively lower interest rates. In this respect, MCCI President, Saiful Islam, suggested that small entrepreneurs get access to finance.

6. PSDPCC Meeting

NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem agreed that partial exporters need support, which needs to be recognised in the regulations. He further pointed out that policy provisions for the partial exporters will be facilitated after the automation of the bonded warehouse system. Moreover, the duty drawback facility will be automated to facilitate the exporters to claim it in more simplified ways.

BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir pointed out that the e-commerce industry does not require a trade licence if the DBID recognises it. Referring to the proposal of BUILD, she urged to consider DBID as a document to get loans from banks. She also said that DBID and Trade Licences should be treated equally. In that respect, the Ministry of Commerce may issue a request letter to Bangladesh Bank to consider either DBID or Trade Licence to grant bank loans.

Secretary, Ministry of Industries Zakia Sultana gave an update on the solid waste and liquid waste management issues of Tannery Estate in the Savar. She informed that MoI received several proposals for utilising solid waste; one of these is to produce raw cement clinker materials.

Muhammad Ibrahim, Secretary of Local Government Rural Development and Cooperatives, requested a separate meeting and called for BUILD to initiate the process for further simplifying trade licence issuance and renewal, holding tax-related issues.

A. B. M. Amin Ullah Nuri, Secretary, Road Transport and Highways Division, Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges; Satyajit Karmakar, Secretary, Planning Division; Shaikh Yusuf Harun, Executive Chairman, BEZA; Nafiul Hasan, DG, PMO, among others, were present and spoke on the occasion.

Syed Moazzam Hossain, Director, FBCCI, requested frequent meetings of the PSDPCC committee so that the private sector can raise their issues freely and frankly. Mohammad Nazmul Hassan, R. Vice President, LFMEAB, raised the issue of supporting manufacturing units for sustaining in the competitive export markets.

The meeting was also graced by the valuable presence and remarks of the Secretaries and high officials of different ministries, ICT Division, PPP Authority, Energy Division, NSDA, BIDA, SREDA, Bangladesh Bank, BSCIC, SME Foundation, BSTI, Prime Minister's Office, etc. Private sector representatives from BPGMEA, BEIOA, etc., shared remarks on behalf of their industries.



7. Working Committee Meetings in 2023

Through its unique collaborative model, BUILD's thematic working committees exemplify the power of public-private partnerships in driving inclusive growth, enhancing socio-economic development, and addressing the evolving needs of Bangladesh.

7.1 SMEDWC Meeting

Call for Promoting the Light Engineering Sector with Targeted Action: Industry Secretary at the BUILD-SME Development Meeting

On 16 January 2023 at the Ministry of Industries, Zakia Sultana, Secretary, Ministry of Industries, called for promoting the light engineering sector with realistic action plans at the 8th meeting of the SME Development Working Committee of BUILD. Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) organised the meeting.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD, presented an analysis of the Light Engineering Industry Development Policy 2022 at the meeting. From the private sector, Mahbubul Alam, President, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce, and Industry (CCCI), co-chaired the meeting and urged the Ministry to keep supporting the high potential section as it contributes 3% to GDP.

While co-chairing the committee, the Industry Secretary said, "We would extensively support the light engineering sector while exploring ways to set up a separate industrial park in BISCIC for the sector and giving special incentives to the sector that shares the domestic market worth USD 12 billion. Having underscored the need for promoting grassroots entrepreneurs of the sector and getting them on board, we will set out specific priorities in line with the Light Engineering Policy, which can be achieved at the earliest. We have a number of laws in place, and we need aligned action plans to go somewhere. So we plan to set out targeted actions that truly facilitate small entrepreneurs, and in turn, they can hugely contribute to the employment generation and eventually export. She added that we would see how the business under the sector can avail of incentives under green transformation funds."

Speaking as the keynote, BUILD CEO said that only five countries import about USD 2.51 tn, and Bangladesh enjoys market access in all these destinations. If we increase by 1%, we can export about USD 25 billion from the sector.

Dr Md Mafizur Rahman, MD, SME Foundation, informed in the meeting that SME Foundation is currently formulating a cluster development guideline. There is no need for a separate cluster development policy.

Mirza Nurul Ghani Shovon, President, NASCIB, emphasised identifying the sub-sector of the light engineering sector. He also recommends creating a common platform to provide information regarding access to finance.

A representative from Bangladesh Bank said that we are very much willing to support the sector during the growing stage, and we will see how they can avail of financial benefits under the collateral scheme.

Dr Nadia Binte Amin, President of WEND, raised that WEs are deprived of financial assistance from the government announced FSP to cope with the aftermath of the pandemic. WEs have suffered substantial financial loss, and the unavailability of the FSP makes the situation worse.

The meeting was graced by the valuable remarks of the high officials from the Ministry of Industries, ICT Division, SME Foundation, Business Promotion Council, Bangladesh Bank, UNIDO, BEIOA, Bangladesh Skill Development Institute etc.



7.2 LIDWC Meeting

Logistics Infrastructure Development Working Committee (LIDWC), co-chaired by Mohammad Salahuddin, Secretary PMO, and Abul Kasem Khan, Former Chairperson of BUILD, held its fourth meeting on 19 June 2023 at PMO, discussed its comprehensive plan of activities for the next year 2023-24. The committee will support the private sector in reducing logistics costs and initiate research and survey as required. The Committee will work extensively in coordination with the National Logistics Development Coordination Committee (NLDCC) formed in the PMO and its five sub-committees.

In his opening remarks, Secretary PMO said that Bangladesh could not be behind while other South and Southeast Asian countries are taking the lead in extending logistics support and already have their policy and strategies. He said that the committee will continue its activities as a permanent dialogue platform to support the private sector and will assess the private sector's demand and its priorities. It will plan effectively what we would like to achieve in consultation with the private sector. He laid importance on how to reduce the costs of logistics. He said, "If we can plan rightly and work accordingly, costs can be reduced gradually." He added that LIDWC will assist NLDCC and its sub-committees to ensure a holistic logistics sector. Development partners like World Bank and IFC may come forward to provide financial and technical support to implement the work plan of LIDWC, where BUILD can coordinate the issue.

Committee Co-chair Abul Kasem Khan emphasised that logistics needs continuous improvement, improved supply chain management, and cost reductions of different sub-sectors. He gave examples of India and Vietnam reducing costs by collaborating with the public and private sectors. He proposed that to facilitate sub-sectoral supply chain improvement, supply chain analysis should be conducted by LIDWC through cost identification and policy intervention through priority selection. With support from the World Bank Group, LIDWC would be the dedicated and unique PPD platform for the logistics development of Bangladesh to facilitate the NLDCC and relevant public agencies on logistics affairs. He added that BUILD has long working experience and the capability to contribute to the logistics sector and thus would be able to support NLDCC and its sub-groups.

BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir urged that to ensure the coordination and harmonisation of activities of NLDCC and sub-committees systematically, LIDWC would be the key player in providing policy research and technical and secretarial support in the long run. BUILD can play the role of providing secretarial services to the five sub-committees formed by NLDCC. BUILD may send letters to private sector chambers on logistics affairs to have specific pain points and constraints the private sector players face while operating domestic and international trade.

Shahida Sultana, DG Executive Cell of PMO, appreciated BUILD's willingness to provide secretarial support to NLDCC and sub-committees. At the same time, LIDWC may come forward to organise outreach and awareness programmes, private-to-private dialogues, policy initiatives for quick win reform, institutional memorise, etc., with support from the World Bank and IFC. She said that P2P and P2G support services are critical. She emphasised that to reduce policy gaps, there is a strong need to talk to the people concerned to know the best possible remedies.

PMO Secretary suggested that a summary of the critical discussion be shared with NLDCC continuously for smooth working. He also indicated that the next meeting of LIDWC be held in September 2023 to consolidate the plan of action.

In the keynote, BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum presented the findings of the outcomes of BUILD's NLIDP workshop that was held on 16-17 November 2022, partnering with PMO, Ministry of Industries, and World Bank Group. It was decided in the meeting that BUILD will share the workshop outcomes in the upcoming 3rd NLDCC meeting. She proposed that LIDWC will form a structured and strong network among the stakeholders to have the inputs from private to private and private to government through consultation, trade logistics tool kit and logistics index formulation, identification of demand and priority selection of private sector, coordination among trade logistics and trade facilitation initiatives, facilitate the NLDCC, sub-committees, and PMO through research, technical and secretarial support.

Md Abdus Samad Al Azad, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, appreciated the proposals of BUILD to come forward with secretarial support to the sub-committees that will smoothen the initiatives in a synchronised way.

Senior Private Sector Specialist of IFC M. Lutfullah pointed out that LIDWC is the permanent public-private dialogue platform of PMO and BUILD that may facilitate the NLDCC with a broader aspect. He added that LIDWC would make a deep dive to identify the logistics sub-sectoral constraints and suggest policy reforms to the government.

The session was graced by valuable remarks from the representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Rail, Road Transport and Highway Division, Bridge Division, Bangladesh Bank, BIDA, BEZA, DCCI, CCCI, BAFFA, BSCMS, etc.



7.3 SGGWC Meeting

The 4th Sustainability and Green Growth Working Committee (SGGWC) meeting occurred on 21 May 2023 at the MOEFCC Conference Room. Dr Farhina Ahmed, Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of Bangladesh, presided over the meeting.

MOEFCC Secretary emphasised controlling the use of plastics in packaging, consumer goods and textiles, and other sectors and said it could not be held since it has consumer demand. She added that we need biobased and biodegradable packaging solutions as alternatives to conventional plastics to control it. She said that we encourage the private sector to establish their businesses, not impacting the environment and biodiversity at any cost and that environmental responsibilities come ahead of business. Environmental issues should be the built-in cost for industries and businesses; environmental governance is vital. We are addressing global concerns, but first, we need to prioritize our local circumstances, and local incentivization is more important than global incentivization. Referring to water scarcity in the coastal area, she cited examples of how people in coastal regions are facing environmental challenges. We cannot jump into de-carbonization in one go. We need to conduct the rational exercise as we are currently in a transition, and our main agenda is to boost the economy, and once we are graduated, we can consider it, she said. She further added that we can work to improve the understanding of the private sector around these materials and clarify how we can develop green industries to ensure genuine environmental benefits. She requested a list of good and bad performers so that bad performers may gradually improve by following good performers.

At the beginning of the meeting, BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum updated the meeting with the progress achieved in the implementation of decisions of the Sustainability and Green Growth Working Committee, and she informed about the formation of two committees on circular economy and recycling and green growth, MOEFCC told that DOE could start working in that respect.

Mehedi Hasan, Senior Research Associate, BUILD, delivered a presentation titled “Decarbonisation and Circularity for the Sustainability of the Clothing Sector in Bangladesh.” The RMG sector is the most significant industrial contributor to Bangladesh’s carbon footprint at 15.4%, followed by textiles at 12.4%. He informed the audience that the total volume of annual leftovers from Bangladesh’s garment units is around 400,000 tonnes; if recycled, this can be a business of more than USD 4 billion. The main challenges towards the circular fashion industry are lack of infrastructure, fast fashion model, lack of awareness and education on circularity, heavy investment requirements, low to middle-end products, import restrictions on cut fabric, poor industrial wastewater treatment, etc.

BUILD urged that duty exemption may be considered for developers of solar cells, and solar developers should get a licence for duty exemption from BERC. The government may encourage green energy production by providing tax incentives through a Corporate Income Tax reduction or accelerated depreciation. BUILD also called for ensuring the inclusion of solar power technology components in the coming import policy order, expanding testing facilities for solar power components, and simplifying the testing process at the import stage.

The BUILD presentation stressed the importance of clear guidelines in Bangladesh’s Building Code for efficient rooftop solar generation. It proposed establishing linkage industries for manufacturing solar panels, Caro cell panels, and cables. A target-oriented action plan was suggested to promote decarbonisation and the circular fashion industry. Importing cut or used fabric could aid in producing recycled yarn locally. The Environment Secretary pledged to work with stakeholders on Extended Producer Responsibility for the plastic sector.

UNDP Bangladesh confirmed its initiation of a scoping study for a 10-year action plan on SDG-12 in response to BUILD’s recommendation, emphasising the importance of country-specific data. Green initiatives were encouraged as a necessity for sustainability.

Chowdhury Liakat Ali from SFD, Bangladesh Bank, acknowledged the need to include the recycling industry in the policy and supported Green Transformation for the sector. BGMEA Secretary General, Md Faizur Rahman, announced the organisation’s plan to reduce emissions by 30% by 2030 and collaborate with international organisations in various development and education initiatives.

Unilever Bangladesh’s Director, Shamima Akhter, informed about their voluntary initiation of segregated bins and containers and requested its inclusion in the policy. She also emphasised the need for infrastructure investment for waste-to-energy projects. The meeting was attended by representatives from various organisations and government ministries, including BSTI, BIDA, Ministry of Water Resources, Finance Division, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, and DBL Group.



7.4 4IR&ICT Meeting

The fourth meeting of the 4IR&ICT Working Committee chaired by Mohammad Rezaul Karim, Managing Director of BHTPA, was held on 24 July 2023 at Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA). The meeting discussed the potential of Assembling Industrial robots in Bangladesh to create new job opportunities.

The Managing Director of BHTPA thanked BUILD for coming up with an essential issue of Assembling Industrial Robots, which has significant potential in the country and sees growing business with the progression of technology. In some sectors, employment has been reducing, so robotics should be developed in a way that also facilitates job creation. Educational institutions have a significant role in upskilling and re-skilling of workers. He added that the Ministry of Industries (MoI) should also develop technology policies suitable to the present need. He said that BHTPA can take the initiative to take specific projects in this respect.

Regarding discussions of the 3rd meeting of the committee on the Data Privacy Guidelines and the telecommunications companies' demand for the 5G network after ensuring all the necessary infrastructure, the BHTPA MD said that we need to ensure smooth coverage of the 4G network first before going for 5G coverage.

Digital inclusion is the most critical component of this journey, and we need powerful access to reliable and affordable connectivity is essential to our aspiration towards Vision 2041. "We need more research," he added, "We must ensure competitiveness and capacity for innovative solutions for embracing hi-tech issues and modern technologies."

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum presented a keynote titled "Potential of Assembling of Industrial Robots for Different Industrial Sectors of Bangladesh", highlighting the potential of social and economic impacts of robot assembling, including job displacement, skills development, and ethical considerations showing some comparative scenarios of other countries.

While delivering strategies and recommendations for policymakers and industry stakeholders to harness the opportunities of 4IR for industrialisation responsibly and inclusively, she went on to show the benefits and challenges of using robots for different industries in Bangladesh.

China and Turkey already use robots in their industrial units, where employment was reduced initially but gradually recovered. Bangladeshi businesses are already stepping into robotics. The rise of global value chains (GVCs) and the fragmentation of production processes present opportunities for intra-industry trade and regional economic integration, and entrepreneurs in Bangladesh can exploit GVCs by becoming an 'assembling' hub. She also emphasised the implementation of Industrial Policy (IP) 2022, which has attached importance to assembling robots. The implementing agencies are MoI, BIDA, BHTPA, BSCIC, and Trade and Industry organisations.

The policy paper recommended a survey for demand analysis on the type of robots needed by the factories in the country, updating the robotics strategies, education and skill development programmes, use of robots initially in risky areas, university-academia collaboration, etc.

Dr Mehedi Anwar, Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Connecticut, US, joined virtually and said that if we want to use intelligent and advanced technology, we must go for 5G.

Syed Tamjidur Rahman, Vice President of Bangladesh Centre for 4th Industrial Revolution, was also present virtually, emphasised collaborative activities in the technology eld, and recommended strategic collaboration for knowledge sharing. He also recommended STEM education initially in the selective sectors; in that respect, BURT can extend support.

Dr Shamim Ahmed Dewan, Associate Professor, Department of Robotics, University of Dhaka, said that we could go for assembling robotics to align our demand. Still, we must focus on a skilled workforce and programming with high-end technology. Further, he urged the concerned individuals to work with all training facilities to get a more skilled workforce. To get a skilled workforce, we must develop skills in our universities and educational institutions.

BIDA Director Golam Mohammed Bhuiyan appreciated the presentation and said that robotics is a potential investment sector. The Deputy Director (Research) of BHTPA noted that we must prepare an execution plan and initiate small and practical projects to gradually promote a Made in Bangladesh brand.

Nayeem Ashraf of a2i informed that different organisations with proper documentation have already prepared six specific strategies; those can be collected to help design a detailed road map for the sector.

Enamul Haz Latif, Research Fellow of BASIS, informed the audience that the demand for robots has been increasing, especially in the RMG and Textile sectors. We need to gather some information about the demand of the export sectors and then explore the possibility of assembling those locally. In response to the tax incentives, he requested corporate tax exemption facilities beyond 2024, which will help the sector move further from the present stage.

Masum Billah, System Manager, ICT Ministry, GoB, referring to a decision of the committee's last meeting on spending CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funding on academic research, endorsed the proposal and proposed that a request can be made in that respect.

Several officials from BHTPA and MCCI, among others, were present and spoke on the occasion.



7.5 T&IWC Meeting

Recapitulation of Regulatory and Documentation Processes to Foster Export Diversification: BUILD Trade and Investment Working Committee

The potential of diversifying exports in the markets of the UK and China was asserted in the meeting of BUILD held at the Conference room of MoC, co-chaired by the Sr. Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh and Md Saiful Islam, President of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI). The meeting emphasised the ease of doing business and reduced regulatory burdens and documentation processes. The meeting reiterated attracting new investments, fostering technological advancements, and promoting diversified product exports, particularly in the key markets where market access benefits are available.

The 10th Trade and Investment Working Committee of BUILD was held on 8 December 2023 where two policy papers titled “DFQF Market Access to China-Policies and Measures to Increase and Diversify Exports” and “UK’s DCTS: Policy Measures to Escalate Export to the UK” were presented. Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and BUILD jointly organised the meeting.

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum reported on the progress of the 9th meeting, highlighting the implementation of eight out of 27 proposed reforms, with nine currently in progress. Acknowledging the collaborative efforts of the MoC, Local Government Division, and Register of Joint Stock Companies (RJSC), she expressed gratitude for the successful implementation of 5-year trade licences, Export and Import licences and the initiation of online Trade Licence services and information dissemination through websites of RJSC etc.

The MOC Senior Secretary emphasised the need to reduce documentation requirements, digitise trade licences, review the imposition of income tax on trade licences, etc. Dr Malay Chowdhury, Additional Secretary, LGD, informed the meeting that five documents are presently required to apply for a trade licence. During discussions, it was proposed to streamline the trade licence document requirements to three: NID/Birth Certificate, nature/types of business, and proof of business ownership.

The Registrar of RJSC was informed that RJSC is working on complete automation of its services. A meeting will be held soon to finalise business categories for simplifying model MOA. Besides, RJSC is in the process of integrating with all concerned organisations like NBR, MOC, and Bangladesh Bank through software upgrades.

In response to BUILD's proposal, the NBR Joint Commissioner informed that the renewal of the Bonded Warehouse Licence will be three years instead of two years for all sectors, which NBR will gazette soon. The MoC endorsed the formulation of a Sub-contracting Policy for all sectors, like RMG for supporting non-RMG exports.

While presenting the policy paper on 'DFQF Market Access to China', the Senior Research Associate of BUILD shared the identified potential sectors, which are leather and leather goods, fish and processed food, plastics, aluminium, boilers, copper, optical goods, wood and wood products, miscellaneous chemical products wigs, and human hair and RMG for the Chinese market. It has been identified that about 137 products were exported, which are not included in the 98% DFQF list. The export of these 137 products was USD 211 million or 31% of the total export (USD 677 million) to China, of which 34 products (USD 128.30 million) from Oven RMG. Due to a lack of compliance and standards, low technology, and a lack of post-export services, exports could not be increased.

The meeting highlighted that China wants prime and fashion-oriented products, which are lacking in our export basket. On the other hand, China is mostly interested in importing primary products from Bangladesh, which has less value addition. In that respect, investment-led exports should be encouraged. Bangladesh presently exports mostly finished products; it needs to penetrate intermediate goods to be able to integrate with the global supply chain. The senior Secretary appreciated the study findings. Following the emerging situation after LDC graduation, he suggested further analysis of the duty-free scenario as per the APTA list to get a clear picture of the preferential export of products from Bangladesh. He suggested organising sectoral dialogues to leverage duty-free opportunities offered by China.

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum shared insights from a study on the UK's DCTS (Developing Countries Trading Schemes), emphasising the benefits it offers to LDCs, including Bangladesh under Comprehensive Preference (CP). Bangladesh will enjoy Enhanced Preference (EC) after Graduation and transition period under this scheme, which is more liberal than EU GSP+. In this study, BUILD identified potentials of high value-added RMG, agro and agro-processed products, leather goods, bicycles, plastics, toys, batteries, furniture, pharmaceuticals, etc., for exports to the UK. The presentation highlighted the situation of the pre- and post-graduation situation of utilising the benefits of DCTS, Rules of Origins and Product Specification Rules (PSR) and cumulation with all DCTS and UK EPA countries, in a total of about 90 countries. Non-Originating Materials (NoM) PSR for LDCs is much more liberal under UK DCTS (75%) than that of EU GSP (47%) and US GSP (35%), the study said.

Bangladesh will enjoy CP till 2029, and we would need to start working on utilising intra and inter-regional cumulation. EPB could prepare a fact sheet containing all related information to circulate among stakeholders on the liberal UK GSP. BUILD study also highlighted the challenges and standard and certification issues, social audits, and at the same time, attracting FDIs and developing infrastructure for increasing export to the UK market. It recommended for updated fair calendar including potential countries, investing in R&D for high-value-added products following income tax policy as allowable expenses.

MCCI President and the Co-chair of the meeting, Md Saiful Islam, informed that the sample import process has been simplified, and they get benefits from it. He requested NBR to allow LFMEAB to issue online UD and co-efficient independently. He also emphasised increasing business connectivity with India by using regional connectivity.

A. K. M. Ahmedul Islam Babu, Director, BASIS, requested more connectivity with Japan, South Korea and India to increase strength, capability and skills to increase access to the global value chain as well as flourishing e-commerce businesses. Md Abul Hossain, President, and Secretary General, BJMA, informed that they produce 128 jute products and wanted country-specific demand and other relevant information for increasing jute export. Ismat Jerin, Director, Jute Skill Council, NSDA; Md Abdur Razzaque, President, BEIOA; and Shahir Ahmed, Chinese Chamber of Commerce, among others, spoke on the occasion.

The Senior Secretary thanked BUILD for coming up with two important policy papers and informed the audience that the government is also serious about simplification of policies to reduce the cost burden on businesses taking care of LDC graduation.

Representatives from MOC, LGD, RJSC, EPB, CBC, SME Foundation, BTTC, BFTI, CCCI, BGMEA, BEIOA, BASIS, LFMEAB, BAPA, BIDA, BPGMEA, among others spoke in the meeting.



7.6 FSDWC Meeting

Thrust on Good Governance in Banking Sector Stressed at BUILD FSDWC Meeting

Deputy Governor, Bangladesh Bank Abu Farah Md. Nasser said that our key focus is to take proper, visible and fast actions to ensure good governance in the banking sector for addressing monumental challenges faced by the banking sectors due to control inflation and volatility in the foreign exchange regime and higher non-performing loans.

The Deputy Governor was speaking at the 11th Financial Sector Development Working Committee (FSDWC) Meeting organized virtually by Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) on November 22, 2023. Abu Farah Md. Nasser, Deputy Governor, of Bangladesh Bank (BB), and Barrister Sameer Sattar, President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce, and Industry (DCCI) co-chaired the meeting.

He further said that the present situation of investment and trade will get momentum after the upcoming election and new administration will boost the confidence of the investors. From Bangladesh Bank, we have adopted a single exchange rate policy despite, it is fixed by the ABB and BAFEDA, we are strictly monitoring the rate. To manage the exchange rate fluctuation, the Bangladesh Bank are in contact with the Reserve Bank of India.

We have already set out directives to the state-owned commercial banks to control non-performing loans and we are planning to form asset management companies from next year, he said.

DCCI President stressed the importance of managing and controlling non-performing loans through the implementation of governance practiced by scheduled banks. He further advocated for the development of a swift recovery plan with the stakeholders recovering default loans to revitalize the financial sector. Additionally, he expressed gratitude to Bangladesh Bank for streamlining the loan sanction process and minimizing approval times, thereby facilitating easier access to financing for businesses.

CCCI President Omar Hazzaz said that we need to promote corporate good governance in the financial sector to gain the trust and confidence while appreciating the research of BUILD.

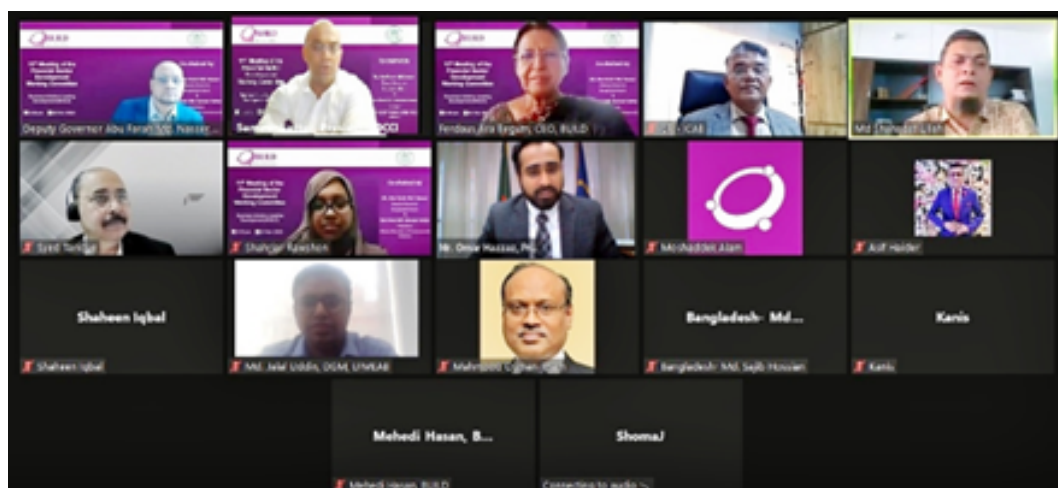
Having updated the implementation on the last 10th FSDWC Meeting, BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum delivered a first presentation on Export Facilitation Pre-Financing Facility (EFPF) highlighting a comparative scenario of EDF and EFPF, constraints faced by the exporters in case of enjoying EFPF etc. The policy paper recommended for increasing the ceiling of EFPF based on the present demand of the sectors up to Tk 30,000 crore (USD 2.75 billion) with proper monitoring of BB from which loans will be given to pay back-to-back LC payments. EFPF loan ceiling for RMG can be increased to at least BDT 300 crore from BDT 200 crore and EFPF for leather sector is seven (BDT 7) crores which could be equal to RMG. It also recommended for online-based application services for the EFPF for proper disbursement, availability of this fund for partial exporters, a safeguard measures for exchange rate fluctuation, alignment for using bonded facilities.

BUILD CEO made another keynote on MPS HI24 Targets and Achievements focusing on Improving Investment Scenarios by filtering development projects during this critical time for soaking external pressures while controlling the exchange rate and broad money. The policy paper highlighted the need for alignment of fiscal policy and monetary policy, redesigning auction process for TB fixation process, non-cash incentives for NRBs etc.

Prof Dr Mahmood Osman Imam, Department of Finance, Dhaka University mentioned that it is high time for government to filter some development projects for some times and restrict the luxurious items of import for at least two years to contain inflationary pressure. For Export Facilitation Pre-Financing Facility, we advised the government to depend on reserve when it was 48 Bn USD and now we advise the government to arrange funds from other sources for such funds as other countries are already doing it successfully.

ICAB Vice President Md. Yasin Miah FCA said that we need to make sure good governance and accountability in all means in the sector to attract deposits and investments and conduct business globally.

The working committee meeting was participated by the members of the committee, representatives of the central bank, ABB, BKMEA, LFMEAB a number of scheduled banks, academicians, business chambers and associations, entrepreneurs from the private sector etc.



8. Major Co-ordination and Follow-up calls in 2023

8.1 BUILD for Full-scale Automation of the Company Registration Process

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) Chairperson Nihad Kabir paid a courtesy call to Tipu Munshi, Minister of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, on 26 January 2023 at the Ministry of Commerce. Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said his ministry would continue its advocacy with other ministries to simplify the process of obtaining certificates and registration, including five-year trade licences to ensure ease of doing business. As part of it, the ministry issued a notice in November 2022 to provide Import Registration Certificate (IRC) and Export Registration Certificate (ERC) for five years rather than one. Referring to the BUILD request for complete automation of RJSC services, he said, “We will go for full-scale automation, and we will be going through some internal proceedings while we aspire to be a paperless office delivering faster business registration services online.”

Calling the need for full-scale automation of the company registration process, BUILD Chair Nihad Kabir expressed concern over the high paid-up capital requirement for one-person companies (OPC). As a result of the enforcement of high paid-up capital, the nation has yet to see the predicted rise in OPC. The existing paid-up capital of BDT 2.5 million should follow the example of private limited companies.

She urged the commerce minister to consider eliminating the BDT 25 lakh minimum paid-up capital requirement for one-person companies while there could be a maximum limit. She also advocated eliminating the necessity for a commercial address when applying for a trade licence to facilitate company operations nationwide.

“The government has extended the validity of all trade licences by five years to reduce the hardships faced during the annual renewal of these certifications, which involves considerable time and effort that, in turn, affects the ease of doing business, and we appreciate it,” said MCCI President Md Saiful Islam. “Following the examples of IRC and ERC of five-year terms, other agencies can issue licences and relevant certificates,” he commented.

Having stressed the need to simplify obtaining a trade licence, he advised that the government could digitally collect all relevant fees and transfer the revenue under the head to appropriate agencies that earn income for providing the licences.

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum said that the notification for five years terms trade licence by LGRD is a great move. Still, the notification was not meant for the municipalities and union parishad, opening the private sector’s concerns as they regularly issue trade licences for thousands of small businesses. The commerce minister endorsed it. She further said that BUILD and the Ministry of Commerce prepared export roadmaps on plastic, leather, and light engineering sectors, targeting USD 22 billion, USD 12.9 billion, and USD 12.56 billion by 2030. Underscoring the need to implement the roadmap’s action plans, she said that the Ministry of Commerce could take the lead and contribute to the country’s export basket. During her presentation, she appraised some research and survey-related activities and assured more collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce while the country transitions to a developing country. The president of DCCI, Sameer Sattar, also attended the meeting.



8.2 Conducive Regulatory Environment for Local Investment Urged During BIDA and BUILD Call

On 8 January 2023 at the BIDA office, Lokman Hossain Miah, Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), called on Nihad Kabir, Chairperson of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), to work together to ensure a conducive environment for local investments, which, in turn, could attract more foreign investments in Bangladesh.

Appreciating the activities of BUILD, he said that foreign investors first meet up with the local investors. “So we need to provide proper facilities and business-friendly regulations to support the businesses and make the local investors happy, and our endeavour needs to ramp up,”.

Highlighting different collaborative activities between BIDA and BUILD, BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir updated about BUILD’s secretarial services to the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC) chaired by the Principal Secretary at PMO to establish a structured mechanism to advocate for private sector issues to work for simplification of regulatory reforms and thus unlocking investment constraints.

She further briefed on the activities of BUILD for private sector development and raised examples of regulatory bottlenecks being faced by the local and foreign investors in the country while Bangladesh is exerting to find investors in several new and non-traditional sectors. She requested BIDA to speed up trade and investment services so that time and cost of the investors could be reduced.

Executive Chairman BIDA informed that BIDA is very much into regulatory simplification and developing several Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) so that all government bodies share the same SOP with the businesses.

Referring to One Stop Service (OSS) in BIDA, he added that out of 150 services, it now gives 67 services, and about 23 organisations are involved in these processes.

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum referred to some of the activities of BUILD in addressing ease of doing business and policy reforms regarding repatriation, which is pursued by BUILD in collaboration with BIDA. She also referred to a business confidence survey conducted by BUILD to gather perceptions of enterprises about general business conditions and their willingness to expand new business and, in that respect, sought cooperation from BIDA.

BIDA and BUILD agreed to revisit the existing MOU (previously signed with the Board of Investment) following the new scopes of collaboration and have it signed for promoting public-private policy dialogue. She also referred to the signature publication of BUILD titled Business Start-Up Licencing: A Regulatory Guide, published by BUILD and BIDA for supporting entrepreneurs and sought continued support from BIDA.

BUILD Chairperson, while thanking BIDA Executive Chair and referring research initiated by BIDA for six potential countries, suggested more collaboration for conducting need-based surveys and studies for attracting likely investment sectors, countries to contribute to achieving investment targets of 8th FYP and Perspective plan 2041.

Shah Mohammad Mahboob, Director General, BIDA; Md Shakil Mahamud, Director (Deputy Secretary), BIDA; Fahmida Jabeen Shoma, Consultant of BUILD; Moshaddek Alam, Additional Director for Communications and Advocacy; and Kanis Fatama, Sr. Research Associate, were present in the meeting.



8.3 Monetary Policy Formulation Needs an Understanding of the Market System

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum stressed the need for monetary policy formulation with a proper understanding of the country's market system and the economy. She spoke as a panelist. The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) hosted the roundtable on Monetary Policy 2022-23 at CA Bhaban on 29 January 2023.

“Unless monetary policy was formulated with a proper understanding of the market system, its impact on the economy would be profound,” said Policy Research Institute's Executive Director, Dr Ahsan H. Mansur. Highlighting India's liberal interest rates, he called for coordination among policymakers in Bangladesh. “Despite disruptions in global commodity supply chains, the authorities took no steps to neutralize its impact in Bangladesh”, he said, adding that the situation could be controlled to some extent by adjusting the interest rate regularly.

Former Senior Finance Secretary Mahbub Ahmed, ICAB former President Dr Jamaluddin Ahmed, Economic Reporters Forum President Mohammad Refayet Ullah Mirdha, Dainik Samakal's Business Editor Zakir Hossain, took part in the discussions moderated by ICAB Council member and former President Md Humayun Kabir and ICAB President Md Moniruzzaman delivered the address of welcome. ICAB Vice Presidents Md Yasin Mia and M. B. M. Lutful Hadee, Council Member and former President Md Kamrul Abedin, Council Members Sabbir Ahmed and Fouzia Haque, Chief Executive Officer Shubhashish Bose, and Chief Operating Officer Mahbub Ahmed Siddiqui were present.

8.4 Policy and Regulatory Framework Sub-Committee Meeting of NLDCC at the MoC

The first meeting of the Policy and Regulatory Framework Sub-committee formed under the National Logistics Development and Co-ordination Committee (NLDCC) was held on 30 May 2023, chaired by Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce. The sub-committee is assigned to prepare the draft of the National Logistics Policy to present at NLDCC. The sub-committee will also prepare an action plan as per its ToR.

CEO BUILD Ferdaus Ara Begum informed that BUILD had already prepared a list of policies related to the logistics sector in Bangladesh, which will help the sub-committee to make a gap assessment. She pointed out identifying policy bottlenecks of the logistics sub-sector that narrows foreign investment inflow in Bangladesh.

Abul Kasem Khan, Co-Chair of the Logistics Infrastructure Development Working Committee (LIDWC) of BUILD, urged to gather the experience and examples of neighbouring countries who are performing well in logistics affairs while formulating the national policy such as India, Korea, China, etc. could be considered in that respect.

It was decided in the meeting that a Technical Working Group would be formed to provide policy and research assistance to the sub-committee to achieve its ToR. The Senior Secretary requested BUILD to share the list of policies relevant to the logistics sector in Bangladesh with the Ministry of Commerce.

PMO DG Sahida Sultana, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Industries, NBR, the Road Transport and Highway Division, the Bridge Division, BIDA, and the Policy Exchange of Bangladesh attended the session.

8.5 Investment Attraction Sub-Committee Meeting of NLDCC at PMO

Under the chairmanship of Mohammad Salahuddin, Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, the 1st meeting of the Investment Attraction sub-committee was held on 12 June 2023 at Prime Minister's Office. Md Ariful Hoque, Director of BIDA, presented the action plan of the sub-committee.

CEO BUILD Ferdaus Ara Begum informed that there are several policy gaps and policy constraints in the ICD, off docks, CFS, C&F, freight forwarding, etc., sectors that narrow the investment inflow in Bangladesh. She urged to assess short, medium, and long-term investment needs of the overall logistics sector in consultation with public and private sector stakeholders and setting annual investment targets.

Abul Kasem Khan, Co-Chair of LIDWC, requested to identify existing problems to invest in the logistics sector and recommend solving the issues and simplifying the investment process. He pointed to mitigating the policy gaps between CFS and Customs Policy to smoothen the investment procedure in the private off-dock industry.

Lokman Hossain Miah, Executive Chairman of BIDA, praised the role of BUILD for putting continuous effort into making a better business environment for the public sector. He assured that BIDA would happily collaborate with BUILD to attract investment in the logistics sector.

The Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office informed that BUILD is the pioneer who took the lead with the support of the Prime Minister's Office to meet the logistics development need of the private sector stakeholders. He instructed the concerned team to form a Technical Working Group to facilitate the sub-committee.

Representatives of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PMO, NBR, ERD, Bangladesh Bank, PPP Authority BIDA, FBCCI, FICCI, BICDA, Policy Exchange, etc., graced the session with valuable remarks.

8.6 BUILD CEO Joins Workshop on Investment Policy

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum joined the Development of Investment Policy Workshop supported by the ADB on 17 September 2023 at BIDA. Mohsina Yasmin, Executive Member (Foreign Investment Development), BIDA, has revealed that BIDA is currently in the process of drafting a comprehensive investment policy. The finalisation of this policy will depend on incorporating the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders. Notably, the policy is designed to encompass a range of incentives, prominently featuring tax exemptions aimed explicitly at encouraging green financing within the investment landscape.

BUILD CEO, in alignment with this initiative, has asserted that the eventual shaping of the investment policy will be a collaborative effort, drawing upon the collective insights of foreign investors, the private sector, and policymakers. This inclusive approach aims to ensure a well-rounded and effective policy framework that caters to the diverse needs of the stakeholders involved in shaping the economic landscape of Bangladesh. She added that BIDA needs to integrate more investment-related services into its virtual One Stop Services, which will enhance the country's investment climate. Presently, BIDA offers 112 investment services from 37 departments through the BIDA OSS platform. Through the OSS, BIDA can deliver the highest quality services to investors and highlight the need for quick and efficient service provision. She mentioned that nations such as Vietnam offer investors all necessary services within a span of 35 days, Indonesia within 48 days, and India within 60 days.

8.7 BUILD CEO Participated at Meeting of NBR

Ms. Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD has participated a consultative meeting on "Medium term and Long term Revenue strategy (MLTRS) on Indirect tax" organized by National Board of revenue (NBR) at Radisson Blue Dhaka Water Garden (Antara Hall) on 5th November, 2023. Based on the presentation points she mentioned some aspects of Automation, dependency on indirect tax, release of imported goods. The automation needs to be fully automated instead of highbred system with manual interventions.

Currently Bangladesh is depending on indirect tax almost two third of the revenue collection, if the TDS (non-adjustable or minimum tax) collected at source is accounted the collection rate would be much higher, the policy need to be rethought toward the trend of direct tax from 35% to 50% by the targeted phases of the economy. Referring Time Release Study, the releasing a consignment from different port remain almost same in comparison with previous TRS, There is a little difference between Authorized Economic operators(AEO) and Non-AEO consignment release which need to be revisited for reducing the time of consignment release.



9. Major Policy Events in 2023

BUILD recognizes the significance of policy reforms in creating an enabling environment for private-sector growth. Through rigorous research, analysis, and evidence-based recommendations, it seeks to address the critical challenges and barriers faced by businesses and investors in Bangladesh.

9.1 BUILD Submitted Budget Proposal to NBR

In February 2023, BUILD proposed that the government consider tax deducted at source as the final settlement of tax and ensuing the TDS refund facilities to all industrial sectors in the forthcoming national budget for 2023-2024.

Currently, only 0.20 per cent of the total TDS collection is refunded annually. Of the 111 industrial sectors, 41 are paying TDS as the minimum tax and are not allowed to get refunds.

BUILD made the proposals at a pre-budget discussion with the National Board of Revenue at the NBR's office at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka. NBR chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem presided over the programme.

BUILD proposed limiting tax officials' discretionary authority. It also proposed lowering VAT on small and micro businesses and integrating VAT return form 9.1 in the VAT automation system. It proposed enhancing customs capacity to meet WTO regulations to achieve LDC targets, as well as providing a bond facility for partial importers. BUILD also urged that tax policy and tax administration be separated.

Along with BUILD, representatives of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority, the Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority and the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority also placed their proposals in the meeting.



9.2 Meeting on LDC Graduation: Sub-Committee on Internal Resource Mobilisation and Tariff Rationalisation

Bangladesh is going to graduate its LDC status by 2026; it is in the transition stage from Least Development Country (LDC). For a smooth transition, the government has formed seven working committees; one of the key committees among the seven LDC graduation committees is Internal Resource Mobilisation and Tariff Rationalisation (IRM&TR), undertaken by the Ministry of Finance. This committee deals with three aspects, i.e., income tax, import tariffs, and subsidies. The committee has formed different study groups.

As a private sector stakeholder and think tank, BUILD works with these study groups. A committee meeting was held on 10 January 2023; BUILD joined the meeting online through Zoom to discuss tariff rationalisation and other issues. BIDS, BTTC, PRI, FBCCI, NBR, EMRD, BIDA, MoF, Bangladesh Bank, WTO Cell and others were also present.

Finance Secretary chaired the session and acknowledged the presence of all in the meeting. Dr Samsh Uddin Ahmed, Member (Income Tax Policy), and Md Masud Sadiq, Member (Customs Policy), gave their study group's presentation, where they discussed their job progress and future work schedule.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, stated that BUILD has already sent their opinions and proposals, as requested. BUILD raised some proposals for protecting the interest of domestic industries, HS code-related complexities, AEO and advancing ruling issues. Through trade facilitation, she added, anti-export bias can be minimised; otherwise, it will be futile. Thus, TFA activities must be completed in accordance with Bangladesh's ratification.

9.3 Discussion on Textile Competitiveness Platform

A meeting among Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), and International Finance Corporation (IFC) took place on 13 February 2023 at BGMEA. The meeting transacted the launching event of the Textile Competitiveness Platform.

The meeting further discussed the agenda of the TCP event and other logistics proceedings. BUILD will draft a participants list and agenda to be shared with IFC and BGMEA, while BGMEA will provide BUILD with a list of brands to invite to the event, and IFC will provide support with booking the venue for the event.

The meeting was attended by Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD; Faruque Hasan, President of BGMEA; Adiba Mehnaz Chowdhury, Operations Officer, IFC; Madhubanti Anashua, Consultant, IFC; Fahmida Jabeen, Consultant, BUILD and Mehedi Hasan, Senior Research Associate of BUILD.

9.4 First Meeting of the NLDCC Held at PMO

Prime Minister's Office has formed a 29-member high-powered National Logistic Development and Coordination Committee that aims to attain national growth targets, improve trade and investment competitiveness, and efficient freight transport and service to make a holistic and comprehensive impact in the logistics sector of Bangladesh. The first meeting of NLDCC was held on 2 February 2023 under the chairmanship of Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to HPM, where BUILD trustee board members led by Nihad Kabir, Chairperson of BUILD, graced the session.

Chairperson BUILD expressed gratitude to PMO for formulating the NLDCC to keep the momentum raised by public and private sector stakeholders to ensure comprehensive development of the logistics ecosystem in Bangladesh. LIDWC co-chair Abul Kasem Khan proposed to form a sub-committee to portray time-bound development strategies for 21 logistics sub-sector. BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum proposed that along with PSDPCC, LIDWC, and the Working Group for Japanese Investors established in PMO, BUILD will be honoured to extend secretarial and research support to NLDCC to serve the national interest as well as to attain the targets of Perspective Plan 2041 by improving the logistics ecosystem in Bangladesh.

Principal Secretary praised the contribution of BUILD for providing policy advocacy through the PPD platform to improve the overall trade and investment competitiveness of Bangladesh. Moreover, he appreciated the proposals of BUILD to facilitate the NLDCC through LIDWC, which will be officiated soon. Finally, Principal Secretary to HPM instructed to form five sub-committee to formulate the National Logistics Development Policy within one year.

The meeting was graced by the valuable remarks of the Secretary/Executive Chairmans of MoF, MoC, MoI, MoCAT, MoFA, MoHA, BEZA, BEPZA, BIDA, and Presidents of FBCCI, DCCI, MCCI, CCCI, SCB, BAFFA, and BSCMS, among others.

9.5 Kick-off NLDCC Meeting Held

A kick-off meeting to set the agenda of the 2nd NLDCC meeting was held on 22 March 2023 at Hotel InterContinental under the kind chairmanship of Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to HPM. It was decided in the 1st meeting of NLDCC that five sub-committee will be formed, and the TOR of these committees will be presented in the 2nd NLDCC meeting. To implement the decision, the Executive Cell of PMO, with the research assistance of BUILD and World Bank Group, prepared the draft of the TOR that was presented by Shahida Sultana, DG of the Executive Cell, PMO, in the meeting.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, suggested developing a mechanism to ensure coordination and collaboration among the sub-committees. LIDWC of BUILD would be happy to extend research and secretarial support to NLDCC by considering its prior experience working with PMO, she expressed. Principal Secretary to HPM expected coordinated support from the committee members to present a draft of the National Logistics Development Policy to Cabinet Division in the shortest possible time.

Those in attendance pointed to address multimodal transport management, 4IR, ICT, investment attraction, policy simplification, skill development, monitoring and evaluation while preparing the National Logistics Development Policy.

The presence and valuable remarks of Secretaries, Executive Chairmans and high officials of public agencies, along with the leaders from private sectors and development partners, assisted PMO in finalizing the TOR as well as gracing the session.

9.6 Second Meeting of the NLDCC Held at PMO

The title of the five sub-committee and their Terms of Reference were set in the second meeting of the National Logistics Development and Coordination Committee (NLDCC) held at the Prime Minister's Office on 13 April 2023 under the chairmanship of Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to HPM. Shahida Sultana, DG of Executive Cell, PMO, presented the draft committee formation and TOR of the subcommittee (namely policy and regulatory framework, infrastructure, investment attraction, institutional and capacity development, and technology and digitalization) in the meeting.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, suggested forming a time-bound action plan for all sub-committees to implement responsibilities assigned through the TOR. She thanked Principal Secretary to HPM for including BUILD and LIDWC in the sub-committee of NLDCC. She expressed candidness to extend all the possible research and secretarial support to attain the objectives of NLDCC.

World Bank Transport Specialist Nusrat Nahid Babi expressed willingness to provide financial and technical assistance to NLDCC to conduct its initiatives. M. Lutfullah, Senior Private Sector Specialist of IFC, informed that a stock-taking initiative is going on to map the projects taken by development partners in Bangladesh for the development of logistics scenario, and the findings will be shared with PMO shortly.

Principal Secretary to HPM appreciated CEO BUILD for coming up with the support extended to PMO since 2020 for the performance improvement of the logistics eco-system of Bangladesh to ensure holistic socio-economic development. He assured the audience that all the session inputs would be addressed to finalize the TOR, which will be shared with members shortly.

Members of NLDCC from the Ministry of Industries, Commerce, Road Transport, Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Civil Aviation, BIDA, BEZA, Finance, Shipping, Bridge Division, LGD, NSDA, NBR, Bangladesh Bank, FBCCI, DCCI, MCCI, CCCI, BUET, BSCMS, SCB, BAFFA, Policy Exchange, LIDWC graced the meeting with valuable remarks.



9.7 Launching of Bangladesh Business Confidence Survey Report 2022-23

The Bangladesh Business Confidence Survey Report 2022-23 reveals that the overall Business Confidence Index (BCI) for 2022 stands at 74.4, indicating a positive outlook for business conditions over the next six months. Business entities across Bangladesh are confident that the volume of orders for the manufacturing sector, demand for services in the service sector, selling prices, and business activity will increase in the next six months. As a result, businesses are willing to expand their employment and investment over the same period. However, business entities, especially in the manufacturing sector, have low confidence in costs, indicating the need for immediate action to address the cost burden of businesses, including the cost of electricity, water, gas, rent, and materials.

The Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) and the USAID-funded Feed, the Future Bangladesh Trade Activity, jointly launched the “5th Business Confidence Survey Report 2022” on 5 March 2023 at InterContinental Hotel, Dhaka. The survey was conducted between September and November 2022, covering 567 business entities across Bangladesh and aimed to analyze the existing business condition in the last six months (March 2022–August 2022) and anticipate turning points in the economic activities for the next six months (December 2022–June 2023) to enable businesses to prepare and plan accordingly to mitigate risks.

Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun MP, Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Industries, was the chief guest of the event where Abul Kasem Khan, Co-chair, LIDWC, BUILD, Martin Holtmann, International Finance Corporation, Country Manager, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal, A. H. M. Ahsan, Vice Chairman, Export Promotion Bureau, Mohsina Yasmin, Executive Member, BIDA, Engr. Sheikh Faezul Amin, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Industries, were the

event's special guest. Md Sameer Sattar, President, DCCI; Naser Ezaz Bijoy, President, FICCI; Zaki Uz Zaman, Country Representative, UNIDO Bangladesh; Munawar Misbah Moin, President, Accumulators Battery Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh, Mohammad Naquib Uddin Khan, President, Bangladesh Supply Chain Management Society, were resource speakers at the event.

Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Industries, congratulated BUILD for organising such an important event. He said that the 6th BCS is significant as it has applied the methodology of harmonised business confidence survey recommended by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Statistics Directorate.

He said that we are pleased to have learned that the overall Business Confidence Index (BCI) conducted by BUILD gave an optimistic perception of business conditions despite Bangladesh's current challenges due to the global economic turmoil. The other scores in the survey show some visible recoveries of business activities and emerging business confidence. However, the cost confidence plummeted to as low as 22.4 over the next six months, and the government must take this into serious consideration in fiscal and monetary measures. In her welcome speech, Nihad Kabir, Chairperson of BUILD, emphasised that Bangladesh has experienced a structural transformation from an agrarian economy to the growing dominance of industrial and service sectors. With an average GDP growth of over seven percent for more than a decade, the country has experienced the fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), accompanied by a rapid increase in digitalisation, and technological upgradation.

She expressed BUILD's commitment to continuing to convene, align and advance the interests of the private sector through principled policy work, value-added business services, and broad engagement to drive competitiveness and economic growth in Bangladesh. She also expressed BUILD's pride in continuing to conduct such surveys, which are used globally by governments and policymakers.

In her keynote presentation, Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, noted that the upward movement in the BCI was driven by improvement in the sentiments for six components out of seven components of the BCI, namely, employment, the volume of order or demand for service, business activity, selling price and investment. Out of the seven components, only the overall business cost index is negative, giving a pessimistic perception. The diffusion index in this study ranges from 0 to 100 with a midpoint of 50, where less than 50 means contraction or less optimism and more than 50 means expansion or optimism. The overall business cost index stands at 35.8 over the last six months (March 2022–August 2022) and expects to reach 22.4 over the next six months (December 2022–June 2023). Around 72% of business entities in this survey reported that the overall business cost will increase over the next six months.

Marc Shiman, COP, USAID FtFBTA, expected Bangladesh Business Confidence Survey (BBCS) 2022-23 would facilitate the government to take decisions to ensure positive confidence of the entrepreneurs in the domestic business environment. He thanked BUILD as an integral part of the project that has conducted advocacy to simplify the business ecosystem, like improving the capacity of RJSC&F, logistics and customs process simplification, etc.

Abul Kasem Khan, former Chairperson of BUILD and Co-Chair, LIDWC, mentioned that the economic trajectory of Bangladesh till 2041 is well defined, and the BBCS pointed out the rooms to address to reach set goals. Policy enablers should focus on the SMART policy initiative to make SMART Bangladesh, replicating RMG success stories for potential export baskets, successfully utilising SEZs and developing logistics infrastructure, skill development, investment incentives, customs automation, etc., for better confidence in the business environment. Martin Holtmann, Country Manager, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal, International Finance Corporation, said the Business Confidence Survey summarises how businesses feel. He added, "It is an individual measurement of the overall business condition

of Bangladesh. BCS is a couple of early morning signs. These signs will help companies to make decisions. I want to thank BUILD and USAID for developing this timely initiative. I want to say that we need to be careful about the status quo bias. We need to look at the trends. We need to give voice to the voiceless; in this case, they are CMSMEs, especially women entrepreneurs. It is well recognised that Bangladesh is doing good in every indicator. You do not need to be a genius to understand that something is happening in Bangladesh.” Holtmann also suggested renaming the index as BUILD Index.

Panel members from both the public and private sectors touched upon several aspects of Bangladesh’s economy and put forward some of their viewpoints for the next BCS.

9.8 BUILD and BIDA Entered into an MOU to Promote Investment

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), a Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) platform signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) to attract investment as well as simplify the investment process and mutual technical assistance and ensure an up-to-date investment environment. The signing ceremony was held on 17 April 2023 at BIDA Conference Room. Lokman Hossain Miah, Executive Chairman (Senior Secretary) of BIDA, attended the signing ceremony as the Chief Guest. Nihad Kabir, Chairperson, BUILD, was also present. Chairperson, BUILD, said, “With global economic activity becoming technology-dependent, we also need to work towards the Smart Bangladesh vision.”

Through this MOU, BUILD and BIDA will establish a professional network, strengthen cooperation and enable information exchanges, and conduct research and policy advocacy between the two organisations to facilitate a transparent, predictive, and conducive investment environment in Bangladesh. Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, said, “With the signing of this MoU, BUILD will work in partnership with BIDA to facilitate investment opportunities and business reforms in Bangladesh. We will, through joint efforts, identify business and investment issues, simplify business processes, remove regulatory barriers, and create a technology-based modern, transparent, and investment-friendly environment. We have already identified nine areas of activities, based on which BIDA and BUILD will hold meetings between themselves once every three months on progress and to-dos.”

The MOU was countersigned by Mohsina Yasmin, Executive Member, BIDA and Chief Executive Officer of BUILD, respectively. BIDA and BUILD will exchange information, and conduct joint research related to trade, investment, and enabling business environment, including, but not limited to, publications, news, and secondary data in a prescribed manner., cooperate to identify common regulatory barriers to private sector investment in the country and strive to eliminate such barriers, finding out simplified and transparent business processes and practices.



9.9 BUILD Launched Data Collection and Research Activities for the 6th Business Start-Up Licences: A Regulatory Guide

BUILD, in collaboration with Feed the Future Trade Activity, will prepare the sixth edition of the Business Start-Up Licences: A Regulatory Guide, which will be completed by the month of August 2023. An introductory meeting in this connection was conducted on 10th April 2023 virtually to introduce the team members to understand their roles in the project. The team included Md Nazrul Islam Chowdhury as the Senior Coordinator and Nusrat Jahan Tania as the Research Specialist.

From BUILD, Moshaddek Alam, Additional Communication and Advocacy Officer, BUILD will work as Project Manager, while Nasibul Amin and Shafat Hossain will join the team as research specialists. From IDG, the team will also include Nuzat Tasnim Dristy and Shahtabul Islam. BUILD CEO attended the meeting to provide a guideline.

The 6th edition of the guidebook, in collaboration with BUILD and FtF Trade Activity, has a target to document 400 trade and business-related licences. This signature publication of BUILD is intended for aspiring, new, and veteran entrepreneurs seeking a licence/permit/approval/certificate for their businesses. The objective is to provide the entrepreneurs with a step-by-step guide on:

- Whom to contact to collect the preparatory information regarding the application
- What supporting documents to collect and collate to prepare the application
- When to pay the associated fees for the application
- Where to submit their application
- How to seek subsequent renewals, etc.

The guide concentrates on demonstrating the applicant's interaction with the issuing agency using the "process map" provided in the guide for each of the licenses and other items. Hence, it will help identify the steps to intervene to speed up the process.

9.10 Bangladesh's Experience in Mainstreaming Gender in Trade Policy

SHE Trade Initiatives of ITC Geneva organised a programme on Mainstreaming Gender in Trade Policy on 15 March 2023 at a local Hotel in Dhaka. CEO BUILD Ferdaus Ara Begum presented a paper on the above. The policy dialogue aims to foster an enabling environment for women-led businesses in Bangladesh.

BUILD CEO informed that gender issues have been highlighted and even separate Chapters are included in different national plans and policies of Bangladesh. The government also introduced several online support services to ease business. Given these, WEs must improve their capacities and access to the Policy Dialogue supported by research with updated information and examples.

In 2017, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and BUILD signed an MoU to collaborate and identify regulatory barriers in national and international trade, propose solutions to eliminate them, build a network with relevant stakeholders, and organise Public-Private Dialogues (PPDs) with stakeholder engagement for WE. Several activities have been organised under the programme; one of the ongoing activities is to ensure the contribution of WE in public procurement.

She suggested gender-disaggregated data analysis so that the impact of trade policies on women and men can be seen separately, identifying gender-specific barriers and opportunities. Gender considerations in trade negotiations are also crucial for the participation of WE in the trade negotiation. Monitoring and evaluating the gender impacts of trade policies is necessary to ensure that they promote gender equality.



9.11 Patent Law 2022

BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir held talks with Industry Secretary Zakia Sultana on 2 March 2023. BUILD CEO and representatives of the Ministry of Industries attended the meeting.

BUILD Chairperson and the concerned sectional heads of the MOI discussed the Patent Act 2022 and the necessary amendments required for supporting pharmaceuticals and other industrial sectors. She requested MOI to utilise the expertise of BUILD in doing the job. Simultaneously, she called for close collaboration between the government agencies and the private sector in the amendment process.

Industry Secretary assured that the government would work in close collaboration with the private sector in amending the current patent law of the country, while Nihad Kabir emphasised enhancing the country's legal expertise for the effective formulation and implementation of the intellectual property rights-related provisions.



9.12 BUILD Collaboration for Bangladesh Business Summit

9.12.1 BUILD presented the BCS findings

In partnership with BUILD, BIDA organised a dissemination session on the recently published 5th Business Confidence Survey (BCS), which captures the perceptions of general business conditions for the past six months.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD, delivered the keynote presentation in the session chaired by BIDA Executive Chairman Lokman Hossain Miah. Representatives of the USAID-funded Feed the Future Bangladesh Trade Activity were present in the session, along with domestic and foreign investors. The Bangladesh Business Confidence Survey Report 2022-23, unveiled on 5 March 2023, revealed that the overall Business Confidence Index (BCI) for 2022 stands at 74.4, indicating a positive outlook for business conditions over the next six months.

Business entities across Bangladesh are confident that the volume of orders for the manufacturing sector, demand for services in the service sector, selling prices, and business activity will increase in the next six months. As a result, businesses are willing to expand their employment and investment over the same period. However, business entities, especially in the manufacturing sector, have low confidence in costs, indicating the need for immediate action to address the cost burden of businesses, including the cost of electricity, water, gas, rent, and materials.



9.12.2. Strong public-private ties needed to become a logistics hub

BUILD Trustee and Former Chairperson of BUILD Abul Kasem Khan emphasised the need for integrated policies, cooperation, and collaboration between public and private sectors to support the country's potential to become a thriving logistics hub. He was moderating the Logistics and Infrastructure Session of the Bangladesh Business Summit 2023, organised by FBCCI, on 13 March 2023.

The session was joined by World Bank Country Director Abdoulaye Seck, former FBCCI President A. K. Azad, Vice-President of PSA Group Business Development Alfred Sim, Dubai Port World Country Director Shamim-Ul-Hoque, Summit Alliance Port Managing Director Syed Ali Jowher Rizvi, and DHL Bangladesh Managing Director M. Miarul Haque. Praising Bangladesh for its remarkable success in various segments such as disaster management, Abdoulaye Seck called for a better focus on trade reforms and financial sector adjustments to scale up competitiveness.

Significant investment prospects await infrastructure expansions, experts said during a session on infrastructure, presented in conjunction with the Bangladesh Business Summit 2023. BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir said there had been reluctance among large foreign investors to enter PPPs in Bangladesh by forming joint ventures with local partners because they were not confident about the capacity of Bangladeshi firms. She made the remarks while speaking as the panelist giving at a session styled “PPP for Vision 2041: Private Sector Role and Investment Opportunities” on the third and concluding day of the Bangladesh Business Summit at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum joined the summit as well.



BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir spoke as a panelist at the Bangladesh Business Summit, underlining that PPP would be a crucial modality in the future to meet our infrastructure demands.



9.13 Meeting with BHTPA

A meeting of BUILD was held with Mohammad Rezaul Karim, MD, Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA), to discuss the progress and implementation of 4IR in Bangladesh following some decisions of the 4IR and ICT Committee of BUILD on Thursday, 22 September 2023, at the Conference Room of BHTPA.

BHTPA Managing Director welcomed BUILD and wanted to know the details of 4IR and how BHTPA and BUILD can collaborate in this respect. BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum made a presentation and informed that as per the decision of the third meeting of 4IR and ICT Working Committee of BUILD, two concept notes on “Digital Marketing Strategies for Creating Public Awareness on Existing Re-Skilling Opportunities Offering by Different Government Agencies and Adoption of Industrial Robots in Different Industrial Sectors of Bangladesh have been prepared. A discourse on the readiness for using industrial robots in Bangladeshi industries/factories and the obstacles and potential may also be conducted, and we can discuss this further, CEO informed.

MD, BHTPA thanked the CEO, BUILD and the team for the presentation and appreciated the role of BUILD in supporting business in Bangladesh. He said that he would go through the presentation and expressed his interest in the activities of BUILD. MD, BHTPA proposed to co-opt some new committee members, such as BTCL to make the committee more effective. A meeting can be held soon after Eid vacation in the second week of July 2023.

Md Mahfuzull Kabir, Deputy Director (Procurement); Khadija Akther, Deputy Director (Admin and Finance); Gibanur Binta Jahir, Assistant Engineer (E/M), among others, were present. Moshaddek Alam, Additional Director of Communications and Advocacy, BUILD; Shahriar Rawshon, Research Associate, BUILD, were also present and spoke.



9.14 Meeting with Bangladesh Bank to discuss EFPF Policy and Interest Rate

A meeting between Bangladesh Bank and BUILD was held on 18 May 2023. Nurun Nahar, Executive Director, Bangladesh Bank, and her colleagues welcomed BUILD. The BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum elaborated on the activities of BUILD's Financial Sector Development Working Committee (FSDWC). A new scheme Export Facilitation Pre-Finance Fund (EFPF), has been introduced for manufacturers cum exporters at a relatively lower interest, gradually replacing Export Development Fund (EDF). BUILD Team wanted to know the details of the scheme. Nazim Uddin, Additional Director, briefly explained the implementation of EFPF and its utilisation and sectoral disbursement and shared some facts and figures with BUILD.

It was informed that there is no such plan to close EDF; instead, it will be adjusted gradually with the economy and foreign exchange reserve ratio. Regarding the EFPF loan ceiling for the leather sector, it was informed that the amount may be increased to meet their demand in case they prove demand within the industry. In response to a point on increasing the amount of EFPF, BB replied that if, after the distribution of the announced amount, more new demand creates, then Bangladesh Bank can increase the amount depending on the situation. So far, BDT 3723.20 crore has been disbursed, covering ten sectors among 291 parties. The RMG sector is the highest number of EFPF users.

BB officials responded that EFPF would help exporters like EDF loans except to meet the conversion risk. However, this risk will be gradually reduced when the BDT-USD exchange rate will be stable. During the discussion, it was also disclosed that online application for EFPF will be possible; 80% of the work has already been accomplished. Is there any plan to set a fixed conversion rate for taking a loan from EFPF on a 3/6-month basis to address the exchange rate risk? BB responded that, at present, there is no such plan to set a fixed conversion rate to manage the exchange rate risk. However, policies can be made more favourable for the private sector gradually.

Another meeting was held between Dr Md Habibur Rahman, Chief Economist, Bangladesh Bank, and Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) on 18 May 2023, to discuss the interest rate corridor and the current economic situation. Dr Rahman said Bangladesh is on the pathway to graduating from LDC status in 2026 and transforming to an upper-middle income status by 2031 and high-income status by 2041. The monetary transmission mechanism needs to be more active to achieve these goals. However, the financial integration with international economics and the development of financial derivatives has made the money demand function less stable. In this context, a forward-looking strategy and an interest rate targeting monetary policy would be more effective for ensuring macroeconomic stability and promoting financial development. Thus, in the upcoming "Monetary Policy Statement," BB will introduce an interest rate corridor as a monetary policy framework to have an efficient monetary transmission mechanism to support our economic growth trajectory.

The lending rate cap will be withdrawn, and a market-based benchmark interest/reference rate will be introduced from July 2023. The reference rate will be derived from the Six Months Moving Average of T-bills (SMART) with a margin. The margin will be determined by BB occasionally, considering overall economic conditions. BB seeks to reduce the amount of Export Development Fund (EDF) now. At the same time, BB also introduced the Export Facilitation Pre-finance Fund (EFPF) intent of helping our export-oriented industries with their development and continued expansion.

CEO extended sincere thanks to the Chief Economist for the meeting and gave some of the insights to be taken by Bangladesh Bank to ease the money supply in the money market.



9.15 BUILD-BIDA Meeting for Collaboration

A meeting was held between senior officials of BIDA and BUILD on 18 June 2023 at the office of the Executive Member of BIDA, Mohsina Yasmin, to discuss some joint activities of BIDA and BUILD as stipulated in the MoU signed between the two organisations.

The BUILD Team was led by Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD. The meeting reviewed the status of the process of updating and publishing the 6th Business Start-up Licences Regulatory Guide and worked out a plan of action related to the joint activities of BIDA and BUILD based on the MoU signed by both organisations signed on 17 April 2023.

The Executive Member of BIDA welcomed the BUILD Delegation and informed them that the Executive Chair of BIDA has, in principle, agreed to support BUILD in publishing the '6th Business Start-Up Licences Regulatory Guidebook'. Then she requested the CEO of BUILD to discuss how they could proceed with the updating and printing the book. The CEO of BUILD gave an overview of the matter.

Accordingly, BUILD CEO underscored that the Business Licensing Book by far is the most comprehensive and easily comprehensible 'one-stop information source' on business licensing and other regulatory requirements in comparison to that of any government agency as it covers licences registrations, approvals, certificates, permits and recommendations related to trading, investment, foreign investment, import, export, security and standard, chemical and explosives and sectoral business and so on. The guide will walk one through the different types of business licences and other regulatory requirements, the various agencies that issue them, the time required to obtain each of the licences and other regulatory documents and the steps/mapping of the application process. This version will include more than 450 licences of 20 to 25 sectors of about 50 plus government organisations.

The CEO of BUILD acknowledged in the meeting that BIDA has been helping BUILD update the licensing book by including many of the existing licences that were not present in the 5th BLG as well as the newly introduced regulatory requirements for starting and operating a business in Bangladesh. The Research Team sincerely thanked BIDA for having the meeting and helping them with the updates. It was also informed in the meeting that USAID Trade Activity is helping BUILD develop the content of BLG, and the book needs to be printed as a hard copy, and it will also have a soft version- an e-book. The book will also be sold online.

The Executive Member, BIDA said that the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and BIDA have agreed to simplify the issuance of electronic taxpayers' identification numbers (e-TIN) to foreign investors by integrating the e-TIN system with BIDA's One-Stop Service (OSS) platform. This will save them from having physical verification or visiting the NBR or its system. This information needs to be highlighted in the book. In addition, foreign and domestic investors now have access to 67 services of 22 organisations from the OSS portal of BIDA. This type of information is needed to be incorporated into the Business Licensing Book so that the entrepreneurs can easily avail of the service. This would also help BIDA keep track of business regulatory issues and endeavour for further simplifications.

She also said that BIDA had provided more than 1 lakh services since 2019 under the OSS protocol, which is remarkable, whereas the other 22 licensing entities (issuing agencies) provided only 500 services. She further expressed that BIDA may help identify priority sectors for this guidebook. This guide can be divided into two parts as the number of pages would cross one thousand pages. The online version will be made available as part of digital accessibility.

The meeting was attended by Md Ariful Hoque, Director (Deputy Secretary), BIDA, and Gazi AKM Fazlul Haque, Director General (Current Charge), BIDA. Md Atik Sarker, Assistant Director, BIDA; Fahmida Jabeen Shoma, Consultant, BUILD; and Moshaddek Alam, Additional Director for Communications and Advocacy, BUILD.



9.16 BUILD Chair Raises Concerns Over Tax Collection Practices

The BUILD Chair emphasised that in cases where businesses are unable to meet their tax obligations, tax agents have the authority to seize business assets as a means of recovering the outstanding dues. Furthermore, she called for the reconsideration of a proposed policy that mandates a minimum tax of BDT 2,000 to be collected from every individual possessing a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), regardless of their taxable income. Additionally, she put forth the suggestion of addressing and putting an end to the issue of “leakages” in government revenue expenditure.

She was speaking at a discussion on the proposed budget and expectations of businesses, organised by Md Siddiquir Rahman, Former President of BGEMA, on 12 June 2023, at Lakeshore Hotel, Dhaka.

Other participants in attendance also brought attention to various topics concerning businesses.

Md Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), said energy availability is a significant concern for businesses.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute (PRI), said excessive borrowing by the government from the banking system would affect the money flow to the private sector. He also questioned how the government would address the high inflationary pressure.

Bangladesh Textile Mills Association's acting president, Mohammad Fazlul Haque, expressed concern as none of their demands were included in the proposed budget. The authorities allowed yarn imports despite unsold stock. He recommended mandating local garment exporters buy yarn locally to save USDs, given the ongoing scarcity.

9.17 The First TCP Meeting Held

The first Textile Competitiveness Platform (TCP) meeting occurred on 17 May 2023. With support from the IFC-led Partnership for Cleaner Textile Programme (PaCT), BUILD organised the meeting. Barrister Sameer Sattar, Co-Chair of the TCP and President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, along with Miran Ali, BGMEA Vice President and Co-Chair of the TCP, jointly chaired the meeting. Ahsan H. Mansur, Executive Director of PRI, Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD and other representatives from government ministries and the textile sector were also present.

TCP meeting united leaders, experts, and stakeholders, fostering collaboration for textile industry growth and regional economic development



9.18 Tariff Rationalisation Study Group Meeting

On 17 May 2023, the BUILD CEO was present at the 8th consultation meeting of the tariff rationalisation study group, which took place at NBR. Ministry of Finance and FBCCI representatives and other stakeholders were present. Speaking at the meeting, BUILD CEO said that the existing tariff or minimum value possesses the same policy status strictly followed in customs valuation apart from abiding by Customs Valuation Rule 2000. Phasing out of minimum value and customs valuation process must be well consulted with the export-import related stakeholders and regarding bonded warehouse facility for all export-oriented industries.



9.19 PMO Hosted Logistics Policy Review Workshop

PMO, in association with the World Bank Group and BUILD, hosted a day-long workshop entitled “Reviewing Regulatory Framework of Different Countries to Formulate National Logistics Development Policy of Bangladesh”, held on 20 August 2023 at the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation. The workshop was graced by the presence of M. Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary of HPM, as the Chief Guest while Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; A B M Amin Ullah Nuri, Secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division; Md Shamsul Aren, Secretary of ICT Division; Nasreen Afroz, Executive Chairman (Secretary) of NSDA; and Mohsina Yasmin, Executive Member of BIDA joined as the Special Guests.

The purpose of the workshop was to gain a better understanding of the logistics regulatory framework of 13 countries (Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, United Kingdom, Germany, Turkey, China, Kenya, Vietnam, India, USA, and Sri Lanka) which were presented by the focal point/alternative focal point officials of the five (05) subcommittees under National Logistics Development Coordination and Committee.

After the end of the presentation session, Shahida Sultana, Director General, Executive Cell of the Prime Minister’s Office, presented the “Summary and Compilation of the Presentations of Logistics Policy Framework of 13 Countries”. She asked the focal point officers of the subcommittees to send the draft outline of the National Logistics Development Policy of Bangladesh for furtherance.

BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir has committed to providing comprehensive research assistance, secretarial services, and robust advocacy support to the Prime Minister’s Office to collaboratively enhance and develop an improved logistics framework for the benefit of Bangladesh. Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, requested the policy enablers to consider the impact of LDC graduation challenges while formulating the “Time-bound Action Plan and Logistics Sub-sectoral Development Strategy of the National Logistics Development Policy”.

Principal Secretary to HPM suggested the subcommittees prepare the draft National Logistics Development Policy by December 2023. A comprehensive master plan will back the policy, he pointed out. The post-workshop report prepared by BUILD was handed over to PMO and World Bank Group on 28 August 2023 at the Prime Minister’s Office.



9.20 Meeting Boosts BIDA-BUILD collaboration for private sector growth

On the 19th of July 2023, Lokman Hossain Miah, Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), hosted a meeting with Nihad Kabir, Chairperson of the Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), at the BIDA office in Dhaka. This meeting marked an essential step in fostering collaboration between the two organisations. During the meeting, Nihad Kabir outlined the various collaborative activities undertaken by BIDA and BUILD. She also provided an overview of BUILD's initiatives to support the private sector and shared practical examples of regulatory challenges both local and foreign investors face.

This discussion emphasised the shared commitment of BIDA and BUILD to private sector development and highlighted the need for cooperative efforts to address regulatory hurdles and improve the investment climate in Bangladesh.

19.21 BUILD Chairperson Met the Hon'ble Commerce Minister

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) Chairperson Nihad Kabir paid a courtesy call on Tipu Munshi, Minister of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, on 18 July 2023 at the Ministry of Commerce.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said his ministry would continue its advocacy with other ministries to support the private sector development. Referring to the BUILD request for complete automation of RJSC services, he said, "We will go for full-scale automation, and we will be going through some internal proceedings while we aspire to be a paperless office in delivering faster business registration services online."

BUILD Chair Nihad Kabir urged the commerce minister to consider eliminating the BDT 25 lakh minimum paid-up capital requirement for one-person companies while there could be a maximum limit.

"The government has extended the validity of all trade licences by five years to reduce the hardships faced during the annual renewal of these certifications, which involves considerable time and effort that, in turn, affects the ease of doing business, and we appreciate it," said MCCI President Md Saiful Islam. "Following the examples of IRC and ERC of five-year terms, other agencies can issue licences and relevant certificates," he commented. Having stressed the need to simplify obtaining a trade licence, he advised that the government could digitalise the process, collecting all relevant fees and transferring the revenue under the head to pertinent agencies that earn income for providing the licences.

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum said that the notification for a five-year term trade licence by LGRD is a great move. Still, the notification was not meant for the municipalities and union parishad, opening the private sector's concerns as they regularly issue trade licences for thousands of small businesses. The commerce minister endorsed it. She further said that BUILD and the Ministry of Commerce prepared export roadmaps on plastic, leather and light engineering sectors targeting the export of USD 22 billion, USD 12.9 billion, and USD 12.56 billion by 2030, respectively.

Underscoring the need to implement the roadmap's action plans, she said that the Ministry of Commerce could take the lead and contribute to the country's export basket. During her presentation, she appraised some research and survey-related activities and assured more collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce while the country is efficaciously transitioning to a developing country.



9.22 Bangladesh Business Summit 2023

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry organised the three-day Bangladesh Business Summit 2023 from 13–16 July 2023 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital. The foreign and commerce ministries and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) partnered with FBCCI for the summit. Ministers from seven countries, including the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, China, Bhutan, the United Arab Emirates, CEOs of 12 multinational companies and more than 200 foreign investors and business leaders from 17 countries participated in the summit.

In her speech as the Chief Guest, the honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina encouraged the country's business community to innovate and diversify by creating new products and exploring novel export markets. She emphasised the importance of utilising innovative ideas for the growth and expansion of businesses. Accentuating the commitment to fostering private sector-driven growth, she expressed the intention to reduce the cost of doing business through policy measures, adding that her government prioritises the private sector, aiming for an investment-friendly atmosphere.

BUILD Chairperson spoke at the “Leveraging SMEs for a Vibrant Economy” session on the third day of the summit. Other speakers include HE Charles Whiteley, Ambassador and Head of Delegation, European Union in Bangladesh, and Shayan F. Rahman, CEO of the Beximco Group.

“Bangladesh will become a trillion-dollar economy much before 2040 because of infrastructural developments, economic growth momentum and condence and the indomitable spirit of local entrepreneurs,” said FBCCI President Md Jashim Uddin. “We had a lot of constraints in the economy. We did not get available land to establish factories, get adequate gas, and we had faced load shedding,” he said, adding, “Even after these, we have been able to make the size of our economy around USD 470 billion.”

BUILD CEO and other officials of BUILD joined the event and actively contributed to the discussions around private sector development.

9.23 Containing Inflationary Pressure Needs Practical Measures

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) organised a dialogue on Monetary Policy Statement (MPS) and Containing Inflationary Pressure in Bangladesh on 30 July 2023 at the BUILD Conference Room. The dialogue majorly covered new areas in the MPS for 2nd half of 2023 (H1FY24), the comparison of the inflationary situation and challenges of monetary policies and the new tool on interest rate corridor (IRC) as followed by different countries in the world. BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum delivered a keynote highlighting the challenges of MPS and interest rate corridor and focused on ways for addressing inflation through different tools of the central bank. She further said that inflation is linked to many factors, such as the state of the economy, the level of inflation expectations, the credibility and independence of the central bank, and the confidence of businesses in the business-enabling ecosystem.

Mohammad Nurul Amin, former MD of NCC Bank, presented the keynote paper and said that establishing a policy of interest rate corridor as a monetary tool is a paradigm shift. He added that the reference interest rate for Banks' deposit and lending rates, named SMART, is transitioning from a monetary targeting framework to an interest rate targeting framework. He said that to contain inflation, MPS is contractionary, as announced, accompanied by specific policy initiatives, but fiscal measures are expansionary. He raised whether we would go for a market-driven treasury rate or follow the donors' prescription to follow IRC. Prof. Dr Mahmood Osman Imam, Professor, Department of Finance, University of Dhaka, mentioned that IRC would be a tool for the banking sector and not for others. At the same time, the SMART rate will work as a reference rate for determining interest rates.

As the Chief Guest, Dr Md Ezazul Islam, Executive Director (Research), Monetary Policy Department, Bangladesh Bank, said that MPS also needs to be communicated. Today's programme is one of the testimonies, and he appreciated the role of BUILD in that respect. He said that the primary goal of MPS is to maintain price stability, and for this, MPS passes through a critical framework. This framework has gone through a number of changes over the years. He added that after the global financial crises, monetary policy statements faced several transitions. This transition mechanism has different channels, such as the interest rate, credit rate, bank lending, and exchange rate channels. The Monetary Policy Committee of Bangladesh Bank continuously reviews the policies so that it can keep balance with several factors. He emphasised financial literacy so that people could understand the central point of MPS.

While chairing the dialogue, Md Saiful Islam, President of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), said that public sector growth is higher than private sector growth, which is critical to the country's infrastructure. The private sector cannot invest more without infrastructure, so both public and private sector growth is interlinked. The government could have filtered some projects that would save us and reduce the external pressures, he further added.

Dr Md Ma-zur Rahman, Managing Director, SME Foundation; Dr Jamaluddin Ahmed, former General Secretary of the Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA); Mohammad Refayet Ullah Mirdha, President, ERF; Dr Lila Rashid, Former Executive Director of Bangladesh Bank; Manzur Ahmed, Adviser, FBCCI; Shawkat Hossain, former MD, BD Venture; Abdula Hai, Manager, Nestlé Bangladesh, including participants from other organisations spoke at the dialogue.

In the discussion, the presence of non-performing loans, SME financing issues, credit support to the private sector, momentum in business and investment growth, creating employment and similar other micro and macro-economic issues came up. The dialogue stressed the need for more elaborate discussion on critical economic issues.

9.24 BUILD CEO Calls for In-Depth Research Before Implementing Trade in INR

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, said sufficient research and discussions should have been held before introducing trade in the Indian rupee. She suggested introducing a single exchange rate instead of four different exchange rates.

She was speaking at a roundtable on monetary policy, jointly organised by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and Economic Reporters' Forum (ERF), at the former's office in Dhaka on 9 July 2023.

Exporters will struggle many months before they overcome the losses suffered for buying the US dollar at a much higher rate to clear import bills for the raw materials to make goods for western markets, said she.

The apparel sector alone incurred losses of nearly BDT 40 billion in the past four months because of a near BDT 10 gap in buying and selling the US dollar.

"But we want the gap to be BDT 1 when buying and selling the greenback with banks," said Mohammad Hatem, Executive President of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association. "We are now struggling to recover the losses incurred from the gap," he said, adding that 2023 is a challenging time for the garment sector as international clothing retailers and brands placed nearly 30 per cent fewer work orders for the current season. Md Humayun Kabir, former ICAB president, moderated and presented the keynote paper.

At the discussion, manufacturers expressed concerns about the availability of energy as they are not getting gas with adequate pressure even though the price was doubled last year.

Jamal Uddin, former ICAB president, said the government's operating cost should be downsized to 50 per cent from 70 per cent. Mahbub Ahmed, a director of Bangladesh Bank, urged for easing the sales of treasury bonds so that regular people can buy such financial instruments. Atiur Rahman, former central bank governor, said only the inflow of US dollars can resolve the current crisis. Shubhashish Bose, CEO of ICAB, and Mohammad Refayet Ullah Mirdha, president of the ERF, also spoke.

9.25 BUILD and C3ER sign MoU for collaborative research and development

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) and the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER) of BRAC University at the BRAC University on 9 August 2023.

BUILD, a public-private dialogue (PPD) platform in Bangladesh, promotes private-sector development and creates an enabling environment for businesses. With a commitment to sustainability and green growth, BUILD undertakes various initiatives to facilitate the transition towards a low-carbon economy.

C3ER is a recognised centre of excellence dedicated to conducting research, advocacy, capacity development, and knowledge management in the field of climate change and environmental issues.

BUILD and C3ER will work together in the areas of research and development, training, and dissemination of research findings and developmental initiatives. Through united endeavours, BUILD and C3ER will forge ahead to steer private sector advancement, intricately woven within the tapestry of sustainable and green growth, all encapsulated within the broader framework of climate change imperatives.



9.26 PMO Receives Report on Logistics Policy Workshop

Ferdaus Ara Begum, BUILD CEO, handed the post-workshop report titled “Reviewing the Regulatory Framework of Different Countries to Formulate National Logistics Development Policy of Bangladesh” to Shahida Sultana, Director General, Executive Cell of the Prime Minister’s Office, on 5 August 2023. The workshop took place on 20 August 2023 at the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation. The workshop was graced by M. Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary of HPM. The workshop aimed to shed light on the logistics regulatory framework of 13 countries (Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, United Kingdom, Germany, Turkey, China, Kenya, Vietnam, India, USA, and Sri Lanka), which were presented by the focal point/alternative focal point officials of the five subcommittees under NLDCC. Shahida Sultana, Director General, Executive Cell of the PMO, appreciated the submission of the report before the deadline. Nusrat Nahid, a Private Sector Specialist at the World Bank and Mohammed Lutfullah, a Senior Private Sector Specialist of IFC, attended the call.



9.27 Key Workshop Validates Private Sector's Climate Action in Bangladesh

A validation workshop titled “Assessment of Private Sector Engagement or Investment in Climate Action” was held at BRAC Centre Inn in Dhaka on 23 July 2023. The workshop, part of the larger initiative by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), aimed to validate findings from interactions with micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in Bangladesh’s AFOLU (agriculture, forestry and other land use) sector. Implemented by BUILD in collaboration with C3ER and BCAS, the event, chaired by BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum, marked a pivotal moment for stakeholders to collectively discuss private sector involvement in climate initiatives, advancing Bangladesh’s commitment to sustainability.

9.28 Policy relevance of logistics sub-sectors: workshop on National Industrial Policy-2022

M. Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to the HPM, was present as the Chief Guest at the workshop titled “Logistics Service Sub-sectors and Its Policy Relevance Under National Industrial Policy (NIP) 2022”, while other speakers were Tapan Kanti Ghosh, Sr Secretary, Ministry of Commerce; Nasreen Afroz, Executive Chairman (Secretary), the National Skill Development Authority, Prime Minister’s Office; Zakia Sultana, Secretary, Ministry of Industries; A. B. M. Amin Ullah Nuri, Secretary, Road Transport and Highways Division. Besides, Shahida Sultana, Director General, Executive Cell of the Prime Minister’s Office; Nihad Kabir, BUILD Chairperson; Dr M Masrur Reaz, Chairman, Policy Exchange; Mohammad Lutfullah, Sr Private Sector Specialist, IFC, Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD; and representatives from 21 Logistics service sub-sectors attended the workshop. The workshop was organised by NLDDC, PMO, the World Bank and BUILD at the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation on 7 September 2023.

Recognising its vital significance, the National Logistics Development and Coordination Committee, Prime Minister’s Office, World Bank and BUILD organised the pivotal workshop on 7 September 2023, at the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation. This workshop, aptly titled “Logistics Service Sub-Sectors and its Policy Relevance under National Industrial Policy 2022”, sought to explore and address critical issues within the logistics domain.

Shahida Sultana, DG, Executive Cell, PMO, welcomed the guest guests and gave a summary of the activities of the logistics sub-sectors included in the Industrial Policy 2022. She informed that the workshop is attended by 22 private sector representatives of different sub-sectors along with several public sector bodies to work closely to understand the present situation of the sector, related policies, administrative status, ministries/offices/agencies engaged with the concerned sectors. A specific template was circulated to the five groups who worked on particular sub-sectors. They also made a presentation based on the discussion, explained the situation of the sub-sectors, identified the overarching constraints, and proposed possible remedies so that the sectors can move further to support an efficient logistics sector in the country.

The Secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division said the Logistics Policy would be interlinked with several other policies, such as the Industrial Policy. He informed the audience that the Infrastructure Development Committee, which his ministry has looked into, has charted out action plans, and they are working accordingly to contribute to the sector.

Sr Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce said that the logistics support services are handled mainly by the private sector; he cited the example of a number of shipping vessels that are not yet registered and need to be registered per the concerned policy. He gave an example of other countries and informed that in several other countries, SMART cards are provided by the government while the private sector extends all other field-level activities; the role of the government is to monitor those activities. Considering efficient support services for competitiveness, he elaborated that logistics is a service industry, and there is a need for massive investment in this sector. We need to analyse carefully how much we would open for foreign investment. He also emphasised the need for skill development and explained that it is not possible only by the government; the private sector would need to join hands in that respect.

Taking a cue from a speaker regarding the simplification of policies, he gave an example of the Import Registration Certificate and Export Registration Certificate, highlighting that they have reduced the requirement of documentation from 12-13 to only 6-7, which would help the private sector to reduce the time for getting a certificate. He emphasised the coordination among all concerned ministries for improved support services. He elaborated that policies are a wish list. In contrast, to get the benefits from the policies, there is a requirement for SROs/Office orders and further regulations, which needs time.

Executive Chairman (Secretary) of the National Skill Development Authority, PMO, in her speech, mentioned that they have several ad-hoc committees established in the NSDC and received several requirements for skill development. She gave an example of Supply Chain activities; under this area, there are several activities such as handling, brokerage, shipping agents, document specialists, etc. In all these areas, we need to develop skills. She suggested a separate workshop for skill development issues so that it can identify the gaps meant explicitly for the logistics sector.

The senior secretary of the Ministry of Industries also spoke on the occasion and referred to the logistics development policy prepared by BUILD, for which MOI also worked closely. She informed the audience that, in the meantime, they have had a number of meetings and charted out an action plan for the skill development issues. She also communicated that her ministry is working closely with the National Skill Development Council (NSDC) and the Skill for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP) to understand the gaps and prepare an enriched curriculum for skill development in logistics.

The Chairperson of BUILD acknowledged the collaboration and support of PMO in having all relevant logistics development activities. She articulated that the workshop is one of the important ones that would give us an idea of the gaps in policy requirements and challenges the sectors face, which would give us an idea of chalking out remedies for removing the challenges. She echoed the voice of earlier speakers and said that efficiencies in delivering better services are one of the priorities to be sustainable in the business.

The Chairman and CEO of Policy Exchange said that logistics is an overarching issue that needs support from all other sectors, such as transport, rail, water, and air. Integrated policy support is required for logistics sector development. This programme would give us an idea to identify the gaps in policies, regulations, and infrastructure development, among others.

In his speech, the Principal Secretary thanked everybody, especially the private sector representatives, for their whole-hearted work to support the government. He emphasised the need for policy simplification and requested the private sector to identify the required areas. He referred to a case of shortage of welders in the country. He added that several major infrastructural projects are going on that require many efficient welders, and the question is why these kinds of skills cannot be developed in the country. He requested the private sector to come forward in this respect. He said that from the 22 private sector representative organisations, at least twenty-two issues should come to us; the government is ready to listen from the private sector as they contribute a considerable proportion of GDP. We need to see a robust logistics sector and more investment in this area to reduce the cost of doing business.



9.29 Analysing Customs and Logistics Regulations for Targeted Reforms

The workshop on 9 and 10 September 2023 marked a significant turning point in the ongoing efforts to support Bangladesh's logistics industry. This collaborative forum, organised by the Ministry of Commerce and supported by the World Bank, was effectively facilitated by the Policy Exchange of Bangladesh and built upon the conclusions and insights from the previous workshop on 10 August 2023. Shahida Sultana, DG, PMO, representatives from NBR, Customs, MoI, MoC, Chittagong Port Authority, BIDA, members from relevant associations, and stakeholders from the public sector were present at the workshop. Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, and Ahmed Julker Nine, Research Associate from BUILD, attended the two-day workshop.

The workshop's primary goal, which brought together a wide range of professionals and stakeholders, was to identify essential tools and reform initiatives. Participants emphasised the need for seamless data sharing and integration between different stakeholders, the necessity of capacity-building programmes for customs officials and logistics personnel, training modules focused on the latest technologies, international best practices, and customer-oriented service, establishing multimodal connectivity, enhanced collaboration between the public and private sectors and highlighted the need for reviewing and amending outdated legislation governing customs and logistics.

These discussions focused on solving the urgent problems and difficulties previously identified as part of Bangladesh's competitive logistics environment, laying the groundwork for a successful future.



9.30 Meeting with BGMEA to discuss the UK's DCTS

BGMEA has an incredibly positive outlook on the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme. BGMEA has started preparing to make use of DCTS. The Readymade garment manufacturers exported USD 5.02 billion worth of clothing to the UK in the fiscal year 2022-23, which was USD 4.50 billion in FY2021-2022, 11.78% growth in a year.

The machinery cost for transforming to MMF is much higher; the minimum investment requirement is Tk 300-500 crore. MMF is environmentally friendly because waste is less, resource use is less, and recycling is easy. In Bangladesh, annual pre-consumer waste is about four lac MT, used for landfilling or incineration. Only two recycling hubs are in Bangladesh; BEXIMCO owns one.

Fabric scraps, locally known as jhut, can be a big source of export if we can utilise these properly; now, we are earning only USD 5-6 million, which can be increased to USD 5-6 billion.

GSP+ requires 50% local value addition. However, UK DCTS requires only 25% (as per CP for LDCs only). After graduation and extended support up to 2029, the garment makers will need a ‘double transformation’ of 50% local value addition. BGMEA has undertaken ‘Apparel Diplomacy’ to increase market access to the UK and expects the UK to extend additional benefits up to 2032. However, there have been no G2G efforts in that respect.

In the meantime, they are more interested in MMF and rather serious about double transformation. Bangladesh produces about 70% of cotton-made apparel. The share of value-added goods is gradually increasing in the overall production. Locally produced man-made fabric (MMF) and yarn will increase value addition. There is a vast global demand for synthetics or MMF. Bangladesh must invest more in manufacturing man-made fibres and fabrics to stay eligible for the GSP+ facility after LDC graduation (in the EU market). However, this requires heavy investment in machinery, manufacturing yarns, fabrics and dying facilities with proper wastewater and chemical management. FDI can be encouraged in these products as they require massive investment.

BGMEA is exploring the UK and other markets to diversify its products. It is looking at capturing markets for outerwear, formal wear (suits for ladies and gents), active wear segments, and non-cotton categories. Faster adoption of technologies is required to reduce the cost of manufacturing.

There are calls by a few importing countries to impose protection measures, such as textile safeguard measures on textile and apparel goods of Bangladesh, to protect their domestic industry.

RMG should increase the use of renewable energy as there is an acute gas shortage and safeguarding the environment. Many RMG factories have installed rooftop solar systems.

In the areas of mandatory ratification of international conventions, while ratification is not obligatory for DCTs, they nonetheless adhere to it rigorously. BGMEA informed that in that respect, the responsibilities of the Government are much higher than those of the private sector. It was reported that 17 observations of the EU in this respect are waiting for a response.

Modern Syntax has stepped up with a big investment in manufacturing polyester and synthetic yarns to fit the bill for global consumers switching from cotton to man-made fabrics. It has invested USD 131 million to produce four types of products, such as polyester draw textured yarn (DTY), polyester fully drawn yarn (FDY), polyester staple fibre (PSF), polythene terephthalate (PET) chips, to provide backward support to readymade garment, footwear, and vehicle-making industries.

9.31 BIDA Workshop on Enhancing Efficiency in Service Delivery

Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) organized a Workshop titled “Streamlining Services by Reducing Service Providing Steps, Time, and Number of Required Documents for Investment in Bangladesh” on 19 October 2023. This initiative was borne out per the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) instructions. It aims to streamline and speed up providing investment support, ultimately fostering a more attractive investment climate for prospective investors in the country.

In pursuit of this objective, BIDA requested BUILD to conduct a comparative analysis of business startup requirements in Bangladesh and other benchmarked countries. Based on that, BUILD analysed the current business startup landscape in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Singapore, and Malaysia and sent it to BIDA on 26 October 2023. The overarching goal was to identify opportunities for further streamlining and simplifying business startup procedures in Bangladesh.

Based on the assessment conducted by BUILD, it is evident that the documentation requirements in Bangladesh are notably higher compared to other countries, which can be reduced further. Singapore is one of the suitable models for commencing a business, characterised by a significantly streamlined process involving fewer permits, simplified steps, shorter timeframes, and lower associated costs. Both Singapore and Vietnam have simplified procedures for starting businesses or making investments. It is apparent that Bangladesh’s policies on paper are moderately business-friendly. However, implementation sometimes takes more time than what is stipulated in the policy.

9.32 BUILD and Ministry of Commerce's meeting on DCTS

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, and her colleagues paid an official visit to Md Abdur Rahim Khan, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, and his team on 26 November 2023. The meeting focused on an ongoing study undertaken by BUILD that focuses on the implications of the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) on Bangladesh's trade with the UK and how the private sector and the policymakers of Bangladesh are responding to the UK's recently announced scheme. The DCTS reduced tariffs on an additional 156 products, made rules of origin simpler and more flexible and eliminated the ratification/implementation condition for countries under DCTS to benefit from preferential treatment.

There were discussions on the following issues: a cautionary approach to FTA with the UK, Bangladesh cannot give cash incentives after LDC graduation but would provide incentives indirectly, shifting to man-made fibre, renewable energy, the possibility of offering bonded warehouse facility agro-processing industry, the complexities of refunding the exporters by DEDO (Duty Exemption and Drawback Office) as well as moving to circularity by 2029 and Circle Economy.

Although there are some advocates for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the UK, Rahim Khan said that instead of the FTA, Bangladesh would benefit much more from the DCTS comprehensive preference scheme for three more years after LDC graduation and then from the DCTS enhanced preference scheme. He pointed out that an FTA with the UK or any rich country would require reciprocity from Bangladesh. For example, FTAs or PTAs between developed and developing countries often require sharply reduced tariffs on industrial goods from the developed country, and it would expose domestic manufacturers to overwhelming foreign competition. This would prevent poorer nations from developing their industrial sectors. He also reiterated Bangladesh's policy on providing cash incentives indirectly or in other forms after 2026, as according to the WTO Rules, the government cannot provide subsidies or cash incentives on exports after a country graduates from an LDC status.

They both discussed the importance of shifting to man-made fibre. Also, they acknowledged that the production of man-made fibre is capital-intensive and requires machinery and technology that can be very expensive for Bangladesh. Foreign Direct Investment in this sector can be encouraged.

There was also a discussion on how the Ministry of Commerce works with the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to reduce or eliminate customs duties and other taxes on seven renewable energy equipment, especially solar panels and solar inverters. The 37 percent customs duty on solar inverters has made solar very expensive for firms working on renewable energy in Bangladesh.

NBR offers bonded warehousing benefits to some export-oriented industries for duty-free importation of inputs/raw materials and packaging materials. However, there are no Bonded Warehouse facilities for exporting agro-processed products.

DEDO is responsible for settling claims of duty drawback, duty exemption and VAT refund for exporters in Bangladesh. DEDO usually gives refunds on the export of several goods, including knitwear, specialized textiles, jute goods, plastic goods, shopping bags, fuel, processed woods, insulators, leather, surgical goods, power transformers, metal zippers, MS products and urea.

In her discussion with Rahim Khan and his colleagues, Ferdaus Ara Begum highlighted the crucial aspect of exporters actively pursuing long-term loans to support their business endeavours. Emphasising the significance of financial stability in the export sector, she underscored the considerable need by manufacturers to identify and leverage opportunities for securing soft loan facilities with extended tenures from various available sources.

9.33 BUILD Chairperson Speaks at the LPI Workshop

In a workshop led by the Prime Minister's Office and supported by the World Bank and Policy Exchange Bangladesh, key stakeholders, experts, and policymakers gathered at the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) on 18 October 2023 to discuss measures for boosting the country's performance in the Logistics Performance Index (LPI). The focus was on highlighting the significance of the Logistics Index, notably the Home-Grown Logistics Index, aiming to articulate actionable strategies for positive transformations in the sector. The collective dedication of participants aimed at cultivating a more efficient and competitive logistics index, laying the groundwork for future prosperity.

Nihad Kabir, Chairperson of the Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD), highlighted the crucial role of logistics in Bangladesh's economic aspirations. "A robust logistics sector is the backbone of any thriving economy," she emphasised, "and improving our LPI ranking is fundamental to enhancing trade competitiveness and attracting foreign investment."

The LPI, published by the World Bank, benchmarks the efficiency of a country's logistics infrastructure and services. While Bangladesh has seen recent progress, jumping 12 notches in the 2023 index to rank 88th, further advancements are crucial to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

Kabir reiterated BUILD's commitment to supporting the development of the logistics sector through various initiatives, stating, "We are actively working with stakeholders to implement effective reforms for the development of this sector."

Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to the HPM, was present as the chief guest. "Bangladesh needs pragmatic and practical policies and measures to improve logistic performance," he stated. "This is a challenging task, as the scope of implementation has now widened from the traditional attention to infrastructure to trade facilitation. There should be more focus on sustainability and resilience, spatial dimensions of logistics, specificity of regulatory and legal frameworks, and skills development. Regulatory improvements should enhance the quality of service. Therefore, concerted efforts by the relevant stakeholders, timely and effective inter-agency coordination, and constant public-private dialogue and cooperation are needed to improve the logistics performance in the country," he added.

The programme emphasised the need for collaborative efforts between government, private sector, and development partners to achieve significant progress. The World Bank representative lauded Bangladesh's recent improvement and pledged continued support for the country's LPI ambitions. With a focused approach and sustained collaboration, Bangladesh aims to climb the LPI ladder, unlocking its full potential as a global trade and investment destination. Moshaddek Alam, Additional Director of Communications and Advocacy, BUILD, joined the workshop and extended support from BUILD.

9.34 BUILD CEO Addresses EU Export Opportunities at RAPID Workshop

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum joined as a Panel Speaker at the workshop titled "Exploring Export Diversification Opportunities in the European Union", organised by Research and Policy Integration for Development (RAPID) on 11 September 2023, supported by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Bangladesh. EU Ambassador to Bangladesh HE Charles Whitely spoke at the event. Senior Commerce Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh was also present. The Economic Research Forum (ERF) and RAPID collaborated to organise this workshop to share findings on Bangladesh's export diversification to the EU and data journalism. Refayet Ullah Mirdha, the president of ERF, presided over the event.

The study indicates that Bangladesh is not maximising over 40% of its export potential in European markets due to limited product diversification and standard certification. Additionally, protective tariffs in the country make the domestic market more appealing for local businesses, posing another hurdle to exports. The RAPID study suggests that in 2021, Bangladesh had a USD 40 billion export potential in the EU, with only USD 23 billion utilised. Of the remaining USD 17 billion, USD 2.5 billion comprises non-apparel items, which the report highlights as having significant export potential.

BUILD CEO addressed the issue of anti-export bias, highlighting its relevance given the heavy dependence of the export and manufacturing sectors on imported raw materials. When discussing impediments to exports, she specifically pointed out the challenges posed by unpredictable regulatory systems. Additionally, she emphasised the urgent need for effective export-financing mechanisms, recognising their crucial role in sustaining and promoting the growth of businesses focused on export activities. Stressing the critical importance of adhering to standards, the CEO underscored how they significantly contribute to facilitating export diversification and play a pivotal role in enhancing the resilience and competitiveness of industries engaged in global trade.



9.35 Discussion on Tannery Waste Study

BUILD CEO joined a programme of Asia Foundation titled “Supply Chain Analysis of Tannery Solid Waste Bi-products in Bangladesh” and put forward her opinion on the study as a speaker on 25 October 2023 at BRAC Centre Inn, in collaboration with Solidar Suisse and OSHE Foundation. Tannery sector stakeholders were present in the workshop.

Speakers have called for a separate supply chain for the country’s tannery industry waste, which is used as raw material in other industries but cannot be managed due to a lack of precise information.

BUILD CEO said that we have scattered data on solid waste, but we do not have any specific data. A separate supply chain can be created for solid wastes. This will enable us to turn waste into resources.

Department of Environment Assistant Director Salman Shawon said at the dialogue, “A common effluent treatment plant (CETP) has been set up in Hemayetpur, Savar, but it is not operating properly. A feasibility study must be done before generating energy from waste.” He maintained that many tanneries must use the CETP to treat their waste properly.

Dr Yusuf Haider, a professor at the University of Dhaka, said, “Our institutions are not giving much importance to solid waste management and by-products generated from wastes. This requires specific structures and policies. Hopefully, the matter will be cleared in the approved Detailed Area Plan (DAP).”

In the keynote paper presented at the programme, Asia Foundation Programme Coordinator Samiha Jamil said solid waste recyclers in Hazaribagh process rawhide trimmings to produce gum, gelatin, and glue. They recycle 14,500 tonnes of waste, generating 725 tonnes of by-products and BDT 2.32 crore in revenue. Samiha Jamil said the challenges faced by solid tannery waste recyclers include the absence of a permanent plot for them in Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, lack of access to –finance, licensing and certi–fication; absence of permission to take out raw trimmings, and lack of technical knowledge. She also noted that over 50 recyclers went out of business as they were left out when tanneries were relocated from Hazaribagh to Savar. Six of the solid tannery waste recyclers are barely surviving and struggling to make ends meet.

9.36 Income Tax Act Lacks Pro-People Attitude

There should have been more consultation with stakeholders before the finalisation of the recently-passed Income Tax Act 2023 as there is a scope for taxpayers to fall prey to harassment during payment of tax, experts said.

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) organised the seminar at its office on 27th November 2023, where experts, former and current senior officials of the NBR, journalists and chartered accountants participated.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, made the introductory remarks and said that The act was passed in the national parliament on June 15 this year after being taken from the cabinet committee on June 8, leaving the standing committee of the parliament with inadequate time to discuss the act.

For instance, no provision was included for the extension of tax return submissions after the expiration of the set timeframe. There is no option for submitting applications to the tax administration, either from individual taxpayers or corporations. Only the tax administration can extend the tax return submission deadline under certain conditions. If the date is not extended for any reason, taxpayers will face a big challenge, experts added.

Another concern is that many people are not aware of the act although it is closely related to their income and life. Even international communities are not aware of this act, which may affect the inflow of foreign direct investment.

The income tax act is also missing principles of justice as there is a possibility of collecting tax from individuals who are not supposed to be paying taxes, said Alamgir Hossain, former member of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), as a panel discussant at a seminar titled "Income Tax Act 2023 - Due Diligence by the Taxpayers".

Since it is a new act, the NBR should have played a proactive role before passing the law so it could be a more pro-people policy, Alamgir added. He suggested taking initiatives to disseminate information about the act to raise awareness.

The act was passed mainly to expand the tax net and to increase the tax-GDP ratio from around 8.9 percent to 17.4 percent by 2031 and to 21.9 percent by 2041. The government will not only collect tax from people in cities, but also from other areas, where many are unaware that the act has been passed and what its implications are.

Muhammad Abdul Mazid, former NBR chairman, echoed Alamgir's sentiments, saying the act was not well-discussed at the grassroots level.

Dhiman Kumar Chowdhury, chairman of the department of accounting and information systems at the University of Dhaka, said the current structure of the NBR needed to be reformed and that independent intellectuals should be incorporated into the board.

Hasan Mahmood, partner at MJ Abedin and Co, said there was some discrimination in the payment of tax on pension funds and other such savings measures.

GM Abul Kalam Kaikobad, member (Tax Audit Intelligence and Investigation) of the NBR, said tax files would not be investigated and audited for silly reasons.

Before the current act was passed, tax rules were applied under the Income Tax Ordinance 1984, which was made time befitting almost every year.

Snehasish Barua, partner at Snehasish Mahmud & Co, and Md. Nooruzzaman, senior research associate at BUILD, presented two separate keynotes at the event. Ferdaus Ara Begum, chief executive officer of BUILD, also spoke.



9.37 Awareness Workshop on Citizen Engagement in Public Procurement

An ‘Awareness Workshop on Citizen Engagement in Public Procurement’, organized by the newly established Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA), was held on 17 December 2023. The event was held at BPPA Conference Room, BPPA Bhaban, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh. The workshop is part of a series of workshops and activities under the project ‘Digitizing Implementation Monitoring and Public Procurement Project (DIMAPP)’. The project is being implemented by BPPA with the support from the World Bank. The Dnet, a consulting firm engaged by BPPA for managing the Citizen Portal, facilitated this workshop. One of the main focuses of the DIMAPP project is to successfully engage citizens, including the local community, women, youth, local government representatives, contractors, civil society in the monitoring of public procurement. The project aims to formulate strategies for establishing a monitoring tool that will involve the participation of the citizens in ensuring transparency and accountability in implementation of procurement and high quality of public service delivery.

The objective of this workshop was to create awareness on ‘Citizen Engagement in Public Procurement’ among women tenderers and to get their feedback on how citizens can participate in monitoring the participation of women tenderers in public procurement contracts.

About 30 women representatives of various business chambers, women entrepreneurs and women tenderers participated in the workshop.

Secretary, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), Mr. Abul Kashem Md. Mohiuddin spoke as the chief guest in the workshop. It was chaired by Mr. Mohammed Shoheler Rahman Chowdhury, CEO of BPPA. Senior Procurement Specialist of the World Bank Dhaka office Mr. Arafat Ishtiaque was present as the Special Guest. Director (Additional Secretary) of BPPA Mirza Ashfaqur Rahman delivered the welcome address. Ms. Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD participated at the workshop. Data Analytics Expert of Dnet Mr. Andalib Bin Haque made a detailed presentation on the Citizen Portal and efforts to engage citizens in public procurement through this digital interactive platform.

on the Citizen Portal and efforts to engage citizens in public procurement through this digital interactive platform.

Discussion Points:

- 3388 women tenderers registered with e-GP up to 17 December 2023
- Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) Policy was approved by the government of Bangladesh which includes preference given to women entrepreneurs and tenderers.
- Women Entrepreneurs wanted to know how BPPA and citizens can ensure that there would be no irregularities or corruption in the public procurement system

- Ensure that 5 percent is reserved for women entrepreneurs in the public procurement system.
- Ensure that women are not taking up contracts on behalf of their husbands
- The training should be simplified.
- WEs would like to know step by step on how they can participate in the public procurement process.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, appreciated the transformation of the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) into the Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority (BPPA) strengthening the public procurement system in the country. Understanding that tenderers had to be highly skilled to benefit from the public procurement contract. One-day of intensive training can be overwhelming for women entrepreneurs. She suggested that BPPA could post in its website multiple virtual trainings on public procurement which can be delivered in short episodes and allow the trainee/women entrepreneurs work through the training program at one's own pace. This can help women from different geographical locations access the training. Such self-paced learning encourages women learners/trainees to manage their own schedules. She also requested BPPA to adopt the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) definition of Women Entrepreneurs. Women's entrepreneurship is defined as 'an economic activity carried out by women who have the ability to take risks and initiatives, and to create, manage, and develop a business or enterprise in a competitive environment'.

The CEO of BPPA thanked the participants and has agreed to incorporate their views and suggestions in the program activities of BPPA. He emphasized that the Sustainable Public Procurement Policy which includes gender criteria for fostering participation of women-owned businesses in public procurement will be implemented.



9.38 Meeting on energy drink standards MoI

A meeting for setting standards for Energy Drinks was held at the conference room of the Ministry of Industries (MoI) chaired by its Sr Secretary Zakia Sultana. All concerned stakeholders were present to highlight the need and importance of Energy Drink. The demand for this sector is increasing and mostly young people have a special attraction for this product. In view of ensuring the safety and security aspects of the consumer MoI and present stakeholders put emphasis on the need for a standard. BUILD presented a paper while BSTI also had a detailed presentation on this issue.

After a detailed discussion, it was agreed that considering the socio-economic aspects of the country and the health security issues there is a need for setting a standard of the product aligning with the international standard, however, there will be further stakeholders discussion in that respect for finalization of the issue. Also, there will be an effort to reform the Narcotics Control Act 2018 in specifying the limit of caffeine in energy drinks.

9.39 Survey findings of e-GP programme

Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) shared survey findings on the satisfaction of the e-GP programme and practices the organisation runs on 30 November 2023 at its conference room at the Planning Commission. The concerned stakeholders were present to share their experiences and recommend improvements to the e-GP programme. The procuring agencies and procuring entities were present. BUILD CEO was also present as a member of the Bangladesh Tenderers Forum (BGTF) and offered her opinions on improving the system.

The National e-Government Procurement (e-GP) portal, available at eprocure.gov.bd, is a digital platform owned, developed, operated, and maintained by the CPTU within the IME Division of the Ministry of Planning of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. This innovative e-GP system is an integrated online hub, facilitating all procurement activities carried out by Procuring Agencies (PAs) and Procuring Entities (PEs) within the public sector.

This comprehensive e-GP solution, a pivotal component of the Public Procurement Reform (PPR) Programme, receives support from the World Bank. Its adoption is gradually expanding across all government organisations, ensuring equitable access for bidders/tenderers and enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the public procurement processes of Bangladesh.

9.40 Meeting on Leather Development Forum (LDF).

LDF Secretariat, supported by the Asia Foundation, held a meeting on 15 December 2023 at the Platinum Grand Hotel, Banani, Dhaka, to discuss several vital topics, which included the finalisation of the LDF constitution, covering operations, LDF memberships, and financial arrangements, the conclusion of the Homepage design for the official LDF website and introduction to the Labour Inspection Management Application of the government (LIMA). The meeting discussed developing a quarterly action plan for LDF spanning January to March 2024.

The significant gathering also discussed collective initiatives for the upcoming year, 2024. Md Taherul Islam, Coordinator of the Leather Development Forum, conducted the meeting. BUILD CEO Ferdous Ara Begum was present to put forward some viewpoints on the issue so that LDF can work adequately to develop the leather sector.

9.41 BUILDs Circular textile policy meeting

On 7 December 2024, BUILD hosted a meeting in their conference room, where they discussed insights from Bangladesh on circular textile policies. Asif Ibrahim, the founder chairperson of BUILD, led the session, and Shams Mahmud, director of BGMEA and former president of BGMEA, was in attendance.

The event was a collaborative effort between BUILD, Chatham House, Circular Economy Foundation, and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), with support from GIZ and Laudes Foundation. The meeting saw participation from various public and private sector representatives, emphasising the importance of circular textile policies in Bangladesh.

During the meeting, insightful discussions took place regarding implementing circular textile policies in Bangladesh. Participants exchanged views on sustainable practices within the textile industry, emphasising the need for innovative approaches to reduce waste and promote recycling. Topics included adopting eco-friendly materials, enhancing supply chain transparency, and implementing circular business models. The session provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of transitioning towards a circular economy in the textile sector, highlighting the role of collaboration between stakeholders in driving sustainable change. The meeting underscored the importance of aligning regulatory frameworks with circular economy principles to incentivise sustainable practices. Participants also explored potential strategies for scaling up circular initiatives and fostering cross-sector partnerships to accelerate progress towards a more environmentally conscious textile industry.

9.42 Meeting at PMO on Logistics

A meeting took place at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to discuss the logistics sector of Bangladesh. Participant deliberated on the initial blueprint and content for a website dedicated to the sector. Private sector stakeholders were encouraged to provide their insights in specified format to ensure comprehensive input. The meeting spotlighted the importance of private sector involvement in shaping the website's content to reflect industry needs and trends accurately. It stressed the significance of creating a user-friendly platform to facilitate easy access to information. Stakeholders discussed integrating interactive features like forums or feedback mechanisms to stimulate user engagement and dialogue. The meeting also addressed the necessity of ensuring the website's compatibility with mobile devices for accessibility on the go. Participants insisted on regular updates and maintenance to keep the platform relevant. The aim is to create an interactive online hub that supports stakeholders and boosts Bangladesh's logistics sector.

10. International Events in 2023

BUILD has made significant contributions on the international stage by organising and participating in various global events, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable economic growth and inclusive development.

10.1 BUILD Joined the Investment Climate Reform Discussion

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum joined the programme titled “Investment climate reform in Bangladesh: Findings from the end-term evaluation of BICF programme”, which was jointly organised by the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the IFC at the intercontinental Dhaka on 22 February 2023.

The evaluation highlights that business registration has drastically changed, reducing the time from 56.5 days in 2009 to just two days in 2020.

The BICF programme pioneered in supporting ICT-led reforms in government-to-business services through the automation of company registration, the introduction of online tax registration and the regulatory framework for e-payment.

The programme also initiated the automation of investor service at the BIDA and helped establish BUILD.

The programme’s second phase has focused on three core areas: improving the investment climate, thus improving Bangladesh’s investment competitiveness; facilitating private investment in industrial infrastructure such as economic zones and logistics; and diversifying exports beyond readymade garments.

Under BICF, IFC helped establish the award-winning One Stop Service (OSS) of the BIDA, which has reduced the time to register a business and deepened reforms in established institutions to improve the investment climate.



10.2 BUILD-IFC Meeting on Planned Private Sector Engagements

A meeting between BUILD and IFC was held on 13 February 2023 at 10:00 am in the Conference room of BUILD with a view to getting BUILD's inputs into planned interventions on private sector engagements that IFC is designing in Bangladesh.

The main objective of this meeting was to discuss planned private sector engagements that IFC is designing in Bangladesh with BUILD. The discussion focused on designing IFC's new private sector development programme and setting up a women entrepreneurs' leadership circle.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD, welcomed IFC Team and thanked them for having this exclusive discussion with BUILD. She gave a brief introduction and informed the audience about the activities of BUILD through the seven Thematic Working Committee and Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee for the development of the private sector. She mentioned the major achievements of BUILD and its impact towards the private sector. She added the progress of the initiatives jointly taken by activities of BUILD- focusing on Women's Entrepreneurial Strength, details activities done between BUILD and IFC-WBG. BUILD also proposes insights on priority areas for intervention in designing IFC's new private sector development programme and shares ideas on developing a leadership circle.

Ashani Alles, Senior Private Sector Development Specialist, Creating Markets Advisory, IFC, thanked BUILD CEO for her insightful presentation. She congratulated BUILD for its achievement towards the private sector and women's entrepreneurship development. She also added that the new private sector development programme would focus on policy formulating for creating new investment in the blue economy, power transmission, and green economy.

The IFC team thanked BUILD for sharing their views and expressed that designing the new phase is still ongoing. They will talk to different stakeholders to get the idea and search for an effective component so that the private sector can mobilise the resources and attract more investment.

Regarding the women entrepreneurs' leadership circle, they informed the audience that this leadership circle would be formed with a small circle initially.

In the end, the CEO of BUILD handed over a set of important publications and the women entrepreneurs survey report by BUILD to Ashani Alles.



10.3 EuroCham: Boosting EU-Bangladesh Business Ties

Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley, on 18 January 2023, said the time has come for moving ahead with a European Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (EuroCham) to promote trade and investment and help ensure a smooth transition to GSP+ era. Senior government officials, business leaders, and EU Deputy Head of Mission, Dr Brend Spanier, attended the soft launching event. Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO, BUILD was also present in the meeting.

EuroCham will be established in Bangladesh to lobby for European business interests and remove barriers to trade and investment. It will bring critical thinking and analysis to bear on key business challenges, stimulating interest in existing and potential business sectors. It will complement existing bilateral chambers of commerce. EuroCham will help strengthen the well-established relationship with the EU as it is Bangladesh's largest trading partner, and European companies are interested in exploring investment opportunities.



10.4 Consultation on Establishing the European Chamber of Commerce

The Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh has mobilised a technical assistance mission to support the creation of a European Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh. As part of the stakeholder consultation, François Kacen, Key Expert 2, Trade, Private Sector Development and Engagement, and Regional Integration (TPSDE) Facility II of the European Union, joined a meeting with BUILD CEO on 24 January 2023 at the BUILD Secretariat. The meeting focused on establishing an EU Chamber of Commerce as well as identifying partnerships/collaboration opportunities. As a critical PPD platform in Bangladesh, BUILD CEO made a brief on BUILD highlighting major activities in Bangladesh and the constraints the private sector faces.

10.5 UNCC Fashion Policy Dialogue: BUILD CEO Urged for the Right Financial Incentives

A policy dialogue titled “Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh” was organised by the United Nations Climate Change on 27 February 2023 at Sheraton Dhaka to identify the key actions that can be taken in Bangladesh to enable change towards the goal of the Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action.

The Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action, convened by the United Nations Climate Change, was established to drive the global fashion industry towards a 1.5 °C future. It was launched at COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in December 2018 and renewed at COP26 in Glasgow, UK, in November 2021. As one of the Fashion Charter's signatories, Bangladesh is committed to implementing changes in its operation and supply chains to enable rapid reduction and phase-out of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, presented in the second session of this policy dialogue titled “Financing Renewable Energy for Bangladesh”. The title of her presentation was “Identifying the Right Financial Incentives to Suppliers”.

In her presentation, the CEO of BUILD suggested that banks and other financial institutions be granted the authority to determine their annual targets for the disbursement of green financing and that this should take place after an annual analysis of the demand had been prepared. Also, she argued in favour of recognising banks for their excellent green performance in addition to recognising them for other financial metrics. She suggested broadening the scope of the loan to cover the purchase of machinery and other areas of environmentally responsible business practices.

She said that considering the reality of Bangladesh, banks may partly waive or reduce the due diligence requirements for small borrowers while applying for green finance, including GTF. According to her, GTF needs to be integrated into composite term loans. Joint processing should be allowed so that a borrower can apply for a term loan of which one part would qualify for GTF. Bangladesh Bank may consider GTF for export-oriented firms procuring capital machinery or accessories from local manufacturing firms. She also urged for a standard format for project profiles and environmental certificates.

The session was moderated by Rubana Huq, Vice Chancellor of the Asian University for Women. Daniel Ciganovic, CFO and Co-Founder, SOLshare and Navid ul Haque, Managing Director of Desh Energy Limited, also presented in this session. –



10.6 Preparatory Meeting of the Japan-Bangladesh Economic Dialogue

BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum joined a preparatory meeting to set the agenda of the 5th Japan-Bangladesh Public-Private Joint Economic Dialogue on 16 February 2023 at Prime Minister’s Office, which was chaired by M. Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Principal Secretary to the HPM. Director General-1 and Director-1 of PMO jointly presented the keynote in the session.

BUILD CEO pointed out that Bangladesh’s logistics sector has more than 19 sub-sectors, and the government is highly enthusiastic about attracting FDI, JV, and local investment in these sectors. She also emphasised the need to advance the effort to formulate the subject of signing an FTA between Japan and Bangladesh.

10.7 BUILD Chairperson Joined the LDC5 Conference in Qatar

The 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) started in Doha, the capital of Qatar. Bangladesh is one of the conference's most significant participants among the LDCs. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, with a delegation from Bangladesh, joined the plenary session on the first day of the conference on 5th March and, in her speech, highlighted the role of development partners in transitioning least developed countries from the list of LDCs. BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir attended the conference as a member of her entourage.

This conference is significant for Bangladesh as the country will graduate from LDC in 2026. Bangladesh must get its development partners on its side to face the post-graduation challenges. However, considering the current global economic recession, this conference is also significant for all LDCs and their development partners.

The conference of 46 LDC countries organised by the United Nations continued from 5th to 9th March. The conference featured plenary sessions, parallel high-level thematic roundtables, and parallel and sideline events on various thematic priorities of the Doha Program of Action (DPoA). Over five days of the conference, BUILD Chairperson met with the private sector, civil society, parliamentarians, and young people to advance new ideas, raise new pledges of support, and spur delivery on agreed commitments through the DPoA.



10.8 Bangladesh Urges the EU to Extend the Transition Period to Six Years

Bangladesh has called on the European Union (EU) to extend the transition period of GSP (EBA) from three years to six years to ensure smoother graduation from the least developed country (LDC) status on 30 March 2023.

A delegation from Bangladesh led by prime minister's principal secretary Mohammad Tofazzel Hossain Miah called on Maximilian Krah, a member of the EU, in Brussels on Thursday.

The delegation included BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association president Faruque Hassan, Commerce Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh, and Bangladesh Ambassador to Belgium Mahbub Hassan Saleh.

The two sides discussed different trade-related issues, including challenges of Bangladesh, especially the country's graduation from the LDC category, and its possible implications on trade competitiveness and the overall economy.

The discussion also covered the issue of Bangladesh's preparedness to continue its growth momentum in the post-LDC era. The Bangladesh delegation also urged the EU to waive its safeguard textile threshold criteria or redesign the mechanism for Bangladesh in the proposed GSP scheme for 2024-2034 so that the country could benefit from GSP Plus after the LDC graduation.

BUILD Chairperson said the EU has helped the country boost its trade, especially through granting GSP and addressing various challenges on the way to development. She hoped that the support would continue in the coming days.



10.9 Meeting Between BUILD and USAID FtF

A meeting between BUILD and USAID Feed the Future Bangladesh Activity was held on 3 April 2023 to discuss the ongoing activities of the two organisations and the potentiality of Future cooperation of joint activities for business enabling environment.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, thanked Marc Shiman, Chief of Party, USAID Feed the Future Bangladesh Trade Activity, for scheduling this meeting within such a short time. She delivered a brief description of some successful accomplished joint endeavours, which are listed below, and offered potential future collaboration based on the experiences.

- Trade licence policy simplification
- Time, cost, and process streamlining survey on RJSC activities.
- 5th Business Confidence Survey
- Training on measuring administrative
- Costs of government regulation etc.
- Preparation of a research-backed publication titled Business Start-Up Licences: A Regulatory Guide (6th edition) — ongoing

Marc informed that trade activities could contribute further to strengthening the capacities of BUILD and extend technical assistance in this respect. He informed the audience about the activities they have accomplished so far: food safety, the New Customs Act, trade licence, and women entrepreneurs. It was agreed that BUILD would submit some new proposals for joint accomplishments while the project will be evaluated by an evaluation team tentatively in August 2023. BUILD agreed to host Easy Export Series prepared by FtF and organise joint seminars on these Export Series.

10.10 Launching of Easy Export Series

USAID FtF Bangladesh Trade Activity organised a launching programme of the Food Safety Series on 11 April 2023 at a local hotel. BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum was present as one of the special guests. Md Nurul Islam, Chief Coordinator, of the Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP), was present as chief guest, while Professor Abu Noman Faruq Ahmmed, Chairman, Department of Plant Pathology, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, was present as a special guest. Marc Shiman, Chief of Party, USAID Feed the Future Bangladesh Trade Activity, also spoke on occasion. Imrul Hasan, Team Leader – Food Safety and SPS, USAID Feed the Future Bangladesh Trade Activity presented the keynote.

CEO said USAID-supported FtF Trade Activity's 'Easy Export Series' will help our growers and exporters understand the food safety requirements, which will enhance their export potential. She said Bangladesh is the 3rd in fish production, 7th in Mango and Potato, 3rd in Vegetable and 3rd in rice production. Bangladesh is the number one country in the world in producing delicious hilsha fish. The only challenge in front of us is to follow food safety rules and regulations rightly, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and achieve international compliance.

There are demands for Agro products among different countries as of 2021; Belgium imported 12.1% of the world's agro import (USD 515 million), the Netherlands imported 8.92% or about USD 379 million, the USA imported 6.6% or about USD 280 million, Spain imported 6.53% or USD 278 million, Russia imported 5.22% or USD 222 million. Agro export can easily cross USD 5 billion from the present level of USD 1.2 billion if some quality, standard issues are maintained. Entrepreneurs suggested that accredited labs following EU standards are one of the main criteria to be qualified to export to these countries.

Exporters face difficulties for the non-availability of Global Certification for the agro sector. The certification given by the national certification organisation BSTI is not always acceptable to the importing countries. The Global GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) aims to establish rules of common acceptance worldwide, develop a framework of good agricultural practice, improve an understanding of good practices, take care of adverse environmental impacts of farming operations, reduce the use of chemicals, a solid commitment to occupational health and services as well as animal welfare. It includes an integrated pest management system and an integrated crop management system also.



10.11 BUILD Trustee Board met the World Bank Country Director

World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan Abdoulaye Seck called on BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir on 10 May 2023 to discuss policy advocacy and research areas, especially private sector development, infrastructure for logistics integration, increasing business efficiency and export diversification. BUILD Chairperson delivered a small brief introducing BUILD, highlighting different collaborative activities between World Bank and BUILD. She further briefed on the activities of BUILD for private sector development, mentioning examples of policy reforms facilitated by BUILD. BUILD Trustee and Former Chairperson Abul Kasem Khan, BUILD CEO Ferdaus Ara Begum and World Bank Transport Specialist Nusrat Nahid Babi joined the call.



10.12 BUILD Chairperson Met ADB Country Director

BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir and ADB Bangladesh Country Director Edimon Ginting met on 3 May 2023 to discuss comprehensive and holistic reforms to create a conducive environment for the private sector.

They held substantive discussions on streamlining business licences, post-graduation challenges, logistics and infrastructural development and opportunities for the private sector to expand to new industries and upgrade existing ones. BUILD CEO also joined the discussion.



1.13 Meeting with ITC, Geneva, on WE Development

BUILD signed an MOU with ITC in October 2017 and, since then, implemented several activities, especially for women's entrepreneurship development. BUILD, ITC, and SheTrades joined forces to empower women entrepreneurs through various initiatives. These included conducting e-commerce dialogues, facilitating access to stimulus packages for MSMEs and women entrepreneurs, providing procurement training for women-owned businesses and officials, organising discussions and workshops on defining women-led or women-owned businesses in Bangladesh, and creating a profile list of 100 WEs.

During a virtual meeting on 5 June 2023, potential areas for future action were discussed to further the joint initiative. Sustaining business competitiveness for WEs post-graduation emerged as a key focus. BUILD, in collaboration with ITC, aims to engage in dialogues with various stakeholders to support women entrepreneurs' business sustainability. BUILD and ITC can also work for the promotion of the participation of women in public and private procurement. Training of e-commerce applications for women entrepreneurs and women-owned CSMEs is another area for collaboration that will support Women Entrepreneurs to be in business.

1.14 BUILD Meets ADB Team

On 18 July 2023, a meeting took place between representatives from BUILD and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Bangladesh at the ADB BRM. The primary agenda was to deliberate on how ADB could extend its support to BUILD in researching to facilitate the ease of doing business by alleviating regulatory constraints and implementing policy reforms in Bangladesh.

During the meeting, Barrister Nihad Kabir, Chairperson of BUILD, provided a succinct overview of BUILD and its pivotal role in advancing private-sector development in Bangladesh. BUILD operates as a non-political public-private dialogue (PPD) platform fostering collaboration between the government and the private sector. Engaging in analytical research and advocacy, BUILD supports the dialogue process, generating evidence-based recommendations for government action.

BUILD's Chairperson emphasised BUILD's part in the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee, advocating business and investment policy reform. Conducting public-private dialogues across seven thematic areas, co-chaired by relevant entities, BUILD addresses obstacles to Bangladesh's graduation to a developing country by 2026. Focusing on streamlining the business regulatory system, especially for women and CSMEs, BUILD aims to enhance competitiveness by reducing time and costs. The Chairperson also highlighted collaborations with BIDA to improve the business environment.

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of BUILD, discussed BUILD's policy-related activities in the logistics sector, emphasising collaboration with the PMO.

Soon Chan Hong, Senior Country Specialist, ADB, Bangladesh Resident Mission, praised BUILD's efforts to simplify Bangladesh's regulatory environment. He informed participants of ADB's support for the government's social protection programme and emphasised ADB's priorities in Bangladesh, focusing on LDC graduation, climate change, business climate improvement, and social protection. He suggested short-term support for BUILD's proposed project on streamlining business regulations, aligning with Bangladesh's LDC graduation. He outlined the modality for ADB's loans and grants, suggesting BIDA or BEZA as potential implementing agencies. ADB may also consider long-term support for BIDA's Framework of Bangladesh Investment and Climate Improvement (BICI) programme in its new country strategy.



10.15 BUILD CEO Participates in World Bank Group Evolution Consultation

Ferdaus Ara Begum, CEO of Business Leading Initiative Development (BUILD), participated in the World Bank Group's Evolution Consultation Meeting on 5 July 2023 at the World Bank Office in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The event was chaired by Ed Mounteld, Vice President for Operations Policy and Country Services, World Bank and moderated by Dr Ahsan Mansur, Executive Chairman at Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh. WBG Country Director Abdullah Sec was also present. CEO BUILD emphasised the importance of public-private dialogue to resolve private-sector issues. She also

The World Bank Group (WBG) has started the process of evolving its vision and mission as well as enhancing its operating model and financial capacity. This process is known as the Evolution Roadmap, which is expected to be developed through a transparent, iterative process and engagement with other stakeholders. The WBG aims to broaden its vision and mission by having "Two Goals": ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity, which can only be achieved through sustainable, resilient, and inclusive development. The World Bank prepared the report, "Evolution of the World Bank Group", and submitted it to the Board of Governors on 12 April 2023 at the Development Committee Meeting.

The purpose of the in-person consultation was to inform critical stakeholders in Bangladesh about the World Bank's report "Evolution of the World Bank Group" and to obtain their feedback and perspectives on the report and WBG's efforts to address the challenges ahead. The consultation in Dhaka had representatives from the academia, think tanks, civil society, government organisations, private sector, international organisations, NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure their voices were heard and incorporated into their vision and mission. The Vice President of the World Bank gave an overview of the "Evolution Roadmap".

The meeting discussed a number of issues. Bangladesh would require USD 230 billion for 27 years to meet SDG challenges. Given that the public sector alone cannot cover this financial need, solutions have been sought to bring the private sector on board. This will require facilitating the role of the private sector to take greater responsibility and to act now to combat climate change.

There should be more emphasis on Sustainable Finance, which evolved from green finance, as it takes into consideration environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues and risks. The aim of Sustainable finance is to increase investment that seeks both positive financial returns and a positive long-term impact on society and the environment.

Increasing concessional loans and grants for youths who undertake projects related to the environment and other climate change projects was one of the suggestions. The discussant suggested helping countries design climate-smart economic development strategies. Emphasis on the mobilisation of domestic resources. Improvement and expansion of technical and vocational training.

World Bank should increase their procurement of sustainable locally produced resources from local vendors to stimulate the local economy. While the roadmap proposes the integration of sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity into the twin goals, representatives of a few countries who participated at the WBG-IMF Spring meeting questioned if there were any trade-offs between climate change and development. This would depend on how and when climate change adaptation and mitigation policies are designed and implemented. UN agencies can work with WBG to create synergy for SDGs before and after LDC graduation.



10.16 BUILD Trustee Board met ADB Mission

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) fielded a mission from 8-11 October 2023 with its Technical Team to initiate the preparation of technical assistance to support logistics sector development in Bangladesh.

BUILD Chairperson Nihad Kabir indicated much scope for ADB to support the Government's reform agenda for logistics sector development. In the areas of skill development, as discussed with NSDA, the Skills Sub-committee and the Ministry of Industry, ADB could support (a) Mapping of occupations in the logistics sector, (b) Preparation of qualification packs, (c) curriculum development based on existing gaps, (d) Certification for skills. Some priority occupations could be taken up, including warehousing supervision, pilot harbour, packaging, etc.

BUILD Trustee and Co-chair of LIDWC Abul Kasem Khan said there is a need to work with the universities and sector skill council to bridge the skills gaps and fill up knowledge gaps for postgraduates in supply chain management, etc. There is a need to retrain university graduates to make them more employable. If Bangladesh is targeting improvement in LPI ranking by 2030, it must reduce the cost of exports (contributing 20% of logistics costs) to 10% to compete with others.

BUILD highlighted the need to streamline business processes at key gateways as there is a need to move physical goods on average 43 times in gateways vis-à-vis only seven times in Germany/Korea. The turnaround time is 24 hours in Germany/Singapore vis-à-vis 24 days in Bangladesh. There is an urgent need to streamline business processes at ports, airports, and land ports.

BUILD also focused on an integrated digital master plan, which ADB could support to bring together individual master plans of various ministries on a single geospatial platform for better logistics planning. It further suggested that there needs to be an institutional mechanism in place to take responsibility for this activity and would require learnings from other countries on how Bangladesh could develop this institutional capacity.

ADB suggested that it could bring in experiences from Korea and arrange for exposure visits of senior officials to learn and understand the institutional mechanism and skills required to undertake this exercise. KOTI, under PMO in Korea, is mandated by law to undertake national logistics master plan preparation for the logistics sector in Korea.

Mahbub Rabbani, Senior Economics Officer, Bangladesh Resident Mission of ADB, Atul Prodhan, Pritom Das, and Jibon Ranjan Das from ADB joined the meeting.

Moreover, BUILD supported the mission meeting with key government, private sector, and development partner counterparts --- Prime Minister's Office (PMO), three sub-committees under NLDCC on Infrastructure Development, Technology and Digitalization, and Institutional and Skill Development of National Logistics Development and Coordination Committee (NLDCC), National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) and Ministry of Commerce.

The consultations focused on ADB's engagement in this sector, agreeing on the next steps and planning follow-up actions, including ADB Technical Assistance to support upstream activities.

The consultations have allowed ADB to identify specific areas of support to the Bangladesh government, which the participants from the government, business, and academia supported. Such support can be categorised into three broad areas: skill development, support towards institutional development for master planning, and developing a tool to ensure optimal utilisation of logistics infrastructure.

From BUILD, Moshaddek Alam, Additional Director of Communications and Advocacy, helped ADB Mission organise all consultations and led the discussions.



10.17 BUILD and Circle Economy Collaboration

BUILD has entered a strategic partnership with Circle Economy — a global impact organisation founded in 2011 — to comprehensively evaluate the socio-economic implications of the European Union's Circular Textile Policy.

Designing collaborative, inclusive, and equitable circular textile policies is pivotal for aligning with global human development and environmental objectives and ensuring a fair transition towards a circular economy. It is crucial for Europe to lead the way in advancing the circular textiles industry while respecting trade dynamics with its partners.

The success and fairness of the EU's circular economy textile policies are contingent on understanding their impact on partner nations and supply chain actors. Currently, there is a lack of systematic impact assessment of EU circular economy policies on trading partners, exacerbated by the absence of insights into trade and policy harmonization dynamics, particularly with low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Failure to design more collaborative, inclusive, and equitable circular textile policies could compromise global sustainability objectives and the policy's core objective of promoting circular trade. In response to these challenges, a two-phased project led by a consortium of globally renowned circular economy research organisations aims to achieve several outcomes:

- Raise awareness within the EU policy community about the need to systematically assess circular economy textile policies' social and socio-economic impacts on LMIC trading partners.
- Increase awareness among the EU policy community regarding the necessity of inclusive processes in legislation affecting LMIC trading partners.
- Enhance understanding among the EU policy community and critical stakeholders in LMIC trading partners about the potential impacts of EU circular economy textile policies.
- Amplify local stakeholders' and governments' voices and concerns in trading partner countries during EU textile policy-making processes.
- Equip the EU policy community with tools and methodology to evaluate the potential impacts of circular economy textile policies by developing a robust impact assessment framework.
- Empower local stakeholders to develop national policy and align with EU policies.

The project consists of two phases: Phase 1 will conduct an initial baseline assessment of two case study countries, Bangladesh (upstream trading partner) and Ghana (downstream trading partner). It will provide valuable insights into trade flows, employment, relevant social and socio-economic effects, and policy interdependencies. Phase 2 will use this foundation to create a robust impact assessment framework for evaluating future circular textile policies' likely social and socio-economic impacts.

BUILD, in collaboration with Circle Economy, will contribute by:

Offering country-specific insights into current trade flows and socio-economic impacts related to EU trade.

- Participating in interviews with relevant representatives from the private and public sectors to assess the potential impacts of upcoming EU circular textile policies.
- Assisting in the publication of a report and dissemination activities within the country and the EU.
- Engaging in conferences, workshops, and forums organised as part of the project.

This partnership between BUILD and Circle Economy underscores the commitment to fostering equitable and sustainable circular textile policies in the European Union, emphasising the importance of considering their impact on global trade and human development.



10.18 Meeting on reviewing the LDC-Ministerial declaration

Two officials of BUILD participated in a meeting titled “Reviewing LDC-Ministerial Declaration for the Thirteenth WTO Ministerial Conference 2024” organised by the Ministry of Commerce on 9 October 2023. The Director General of WTO Cell, MOC, chaired the meeting, and various sector representatives were also present.

The government of Djibouti had prepared the draft declaration on behalf of all LDC countries. The primary objective of this meeting was to provide feedback on the proposed declaration, considering the country’s context and other perspectives from LDCs. The aim was to prepare to present the country’s viewpoint at the Senior Officials meeting of the WTO General Council scheduled for 23-24 October 2023.

In line with the decisions made during the meeting, BUILD shared its comments and observations regarding the draft LDC-specific MC13 Declaration, considering the country’s perspective. A decision was made at the WTO General Council meeting on 23 October that Bangladesh can enjoy trade benefits beyond graduation from the LDC bracket in November 2026. Yet, a definitive timeframe for extending benefits is not provided. Despite the positive outcome for Bangladesh at the WTO meeting, the absence of a specific timeline for the extension of trade benefits raises uncertainties about the post-2026 scenario. Clarity on this aspect remains crucial for the nation’s strategic planning and smooth economic transition beyond its LDC status.

10.19 Call-on Meeting Between USAID and BUILD Held

A Call-on Meeting between USAID & BUILD was held on December 28, 2023, at the USAID office to discuss the potential areas of activity that need to be done to enable the business environment to support the growth trajectory envisioned by the government of Bangladesh and how USAID can support as a development partner.

Following initial pleasantries and introductions, the CEO of BUILD delivered a concise presentation on the organization and its primary initiatives aimed at fostering private sector development. She outlined BUILD’s objectives, highlighted the formation of seven working committees, and touched upon the activities of the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC). The CEO also shed light on collaborative endeavors with Trade Activity, USAID, including the 5th Business Confidence Survey and the 6th Business Start-up License Guide.

During the presentation, emphasis was placed on the areas crucial for competitiveness in the Post-LDC (Least Developed Country) scenario. CEO expressing concerns about excessive regulatory requirements and procedures as commonly cited barriers where Trade facilitation emerged as a pivotal instrument. BUILD has been actively involved in tackling these challenges, she noted, and suggested that there is room for further improvements in this regard.

Inspired by the insights shared by the CEO of BUILD, Mr. Reed J. Aeschliman, the Mission Director of USAID, conveyed his enthusiasm for collaborating on enabling business environment to support for smooth growth trajectory envisioned by the government. He underscored the importance of an effective Public-Private Partnership approach and advocated for organizing constructive dialogues aimed at reducing the cost of doing business, minimizing trade barriers, and enhancing the capabilities of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for overall economic growth. Mr. Aeschliman also drew upon experiences from initiatives in Pakistan and Sri Lanka in a similar context.

Emphasizing the pivotal role of both the public and private sectors in fostering a favorable business environment, he expressed a keen interest in joint efforts with BUILD. Specifically, he proposed collaborative dialogues focusing on reducing regulatory barriers, improving the overall business environment, and addressing specific issues such as increasing agricultural exports and enhancing laboratory facilities. In the course of the discussion, Mr. Aeschliman revealed USAID's plans to organize a conference centered on prosperity, linking trade, business, foreign direct investment (FDI), rights to freedom, renewable energy, and other pertinent topics.

Furthermore, he extended an invitation to continue discussions with BUILD regarding the organization of the proposed conference, showcasing USAID's commitment to facilitating meaningful exchanges that contribute to economic prosperity and development. Following decisions were made at the meeting.

1. USAID and BUILD will stay in touch and engage in ongoing discussions to coordinate the Conference post-Ramadan, around mid-April 2024.
2. Discussion will be continued for crafting several dialogues with a specific focus on diminishing regulatory barriers and enhancing the overall business environment within the country.
3. BUILD and USAID through Trade Activity will design and organize high-key events promoting systematic changes.
4. BUILD and USAID will actively engage with private sectors and sensitize the Government for policy reforms.



11. Projects of BUILD in 2023

SL	PROJECT	CLIENT
1	EU Circular Economy	Chatham House
2	Textile Competitiveness Platform (TCP)	IFC
3	Logistics Support for Workshop on Logistics Policy Review and Preparation of Outline	WBG
4	Logistics Support for Workshop on Logistics Policy	WBG
5	USAID Feed the Future – Bangladesh Improving Trade and Business Enabling Environment (FtF-BITBEE) and Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)	USAID-FTFBITBEE
6	Background Paper and National Stakeholder Dialogue on Private Sector engagement in Climate Actions: Focus on Private Sector Investment in AFOLU Sector by BCAS, C3ER and BUILD	FAO-Ministry of Planning
7	Accelerate the transition to circular value chains for plastics and textiles, through industrial pilots and capacity building for circular economy-enabling stakeholders.	UNIDO and Switch Asia

12. Financial Report



Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)

Independent Auditor's Report and Audited Financial Statements

As at and for the year ended 30 June 2023



ACNABIN

Chartered Accountants

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NETWORK MEMBER

**Independent Auditor's Report
to the Board of Trustee of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD)**

Opinion

We have audited the Financial Statements of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) ("the Trust"), which comprise the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023, Statement of Income & Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flow and Statement of Changes in Fund for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023, Statement of Income & Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flow and Statement of Changes in Fund for the year then ended in accordance and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report.

We are independent of the organization in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Bangladesh, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements to give a true and fair view in accordance with accounting policies summarized in Notes to the financial statements and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Trust or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Trusts' financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Trust to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure, and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.



ACNABIN
Chartered Accountants

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dated, 30 JAN 2024

ACNABIN Chartered Accountants

Firm's Enlistment Number: CAF-001-012

Md. Rokonuzzaman FCA

Partner

Enrollment No: 0739

DVC:2401300739A0214527




BUSINESS INITIATIVE LEADING DEVELOPMENT (BUILD)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at 30 June 2023

Particulars	Notes	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022
Assets			
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant & Equipment	03.00	4,377,024	5,238,366
Total Non-Current Assets		4,377,024	5,238,366
Current Assets			
Accounts Receivable	04.00	1,254,000	100,000
Advance	05.00	30,000	-
Fixed Deposit	06.00	87,819,363	82,538,815
Interest Receivable	07.00	2,514,481	2,266,012
Cash & Cash Equivalent	09.00	1,449,556	12,425,951
Total Current Assets		93,067,400	97,330,778
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable	10.00	120,269	1,391,110
Provision for Income Tax	11.00	1,000,872	-
Total Current Liability		1,121,141	1,391,110
Net Current Assets		91,946,259	95,939,668
Net Assets		96,323,282	101,178,035
Fund & Liabilities			
Endowment Fund	12.00	72,950,183	72,537,043
Excess of Income over Expenditure/Expenditure over Income	13.00	23,373,099	28,640,992
Total Fund & Liabilities		96,323,282	101,178,035

The annexed notes form an integral part of Financial Statements.


Chief Executive Officer, BUILD


Chairperson, BUILD
As per our report of the same date

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dated, **30 JAN 2024**

ACNABIN Chartered Accountants
Firm's Enlishment Number: CAF-001-012



Md. Rokonzaman FCA
Partner
Enrollment No.: 0739
DVC: 2401300739A0214527



BUSINESS INITIATIVE LEADING DEVELOPMENT (BUILD)

STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE

For the year ended 30 June 2023

Particulars	Notes	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022
Income			
Contribution Income	14.00	10,096,572	16,831,096
Interest Income	15.00	5,613,934	2,503,564
Other income	16.00	8,331	32,196
Total Income		15,718,838	19,366,856
Expenses			
Salaries & Allowances	17.00	12,185,394	5,594,489
Administrative Expenses	18.00	7,060,366	2,042,015
Total Expense		19,245,760	7,636,504
Income/(Loss) before tax		(3,526,922)	11,730,352
Income Tax Expense	19.00	1,740,971	-
Excess of Income/(Loss) over Expenditure (Transferred to statement of Financial Position)		(5,267,893)	11,730,352

The annexed notes form an integral part of Financial Statements.



Chief Executive Officer, BUILD



Chairperson, BUILD

As per our report of the same date

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dated, **30 JAN 2024**

ACNABIN Chartered Accountants

Firm's Enlishment Number: CAF-001-012



Md. Rokonzaman FCA

Partner.

Enrollment No.: 0739

DVC: 2401300739A0214527



BUSINESS INITIATIVE LEADING DEVELOPMENT (BUILD)
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
For the year ended 30 June 2023

Particulars	30.06.2023 (Taka)	30.06.2022 (Taka)
A. Cash flows from operating activities:		
Net Income	(5,267,893)	11,730,352
Adjustment to Reconcile Net Income to Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities:		
Depreciation on Fixed Asset	985,214	204,289
Decrease in Account Receivable	(1,154,000)	20,000
Decrease in Advance	(30,000)	-
Decrease in Prepaid Expenses	-	-
Less: Decrease in Account Payable	(1,270,841)	952,960
Add: Increase in Income Tax Payable	1,000,872	-
Gain on Sale of Asset	-	(4,798)
Loss on Sale of Asset	12,502	33,366
Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities	(5,724,145)	12,936,168
B. Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of Assets	(137,337)	(4,557,589)
Addition Interest Receivable	(248,468)	(1,406,806)
Sale of Asset	963	-
Addition of FDR	(5,280,548)	1,322,937
Net cash used by investing activities	(5,665,390)	(4,641,457)
C. Cash flows from financing activities:		
Loan Received	-	-
Endowment Fund Received	413,141	81,512
Net cash provided by financing activities:	413,141	81,512
Net Increase/Decrease in Cash & Cash Equivalents (A+B+C)	(10,976,395)	8,376,224
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning	12,425,951	4,049,728
Cash and cash equivalents at closing	1,449,556	12,425,951

The annexed notes form an integral part of these Financial Statements.


Chief Executive Officer, BUILD


Chairperson, BUILD

Dhaka, Bangladesh

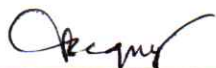
Dated, 30 JAN 2024

BUSINESS INITIATIVE LEADING DEVELOPMENT (BUILD)

Statement of Changes in Fund
 For the period of 01 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

(Amount in Taka)

Particulars	Endowment Fund	Retained Earning	Total Fund
A. Balance as at 1st January 2022	72,537,043	28,640,992	101,178,035
Addition during the period:			
Endowment Fund	413,141	-	413,141
Excess of Income over Expenditure	-	(5,267,893)	(5,267,893)
B. Total Income	72,950,183	23,373,099	96,323,282



Chief Executive Officer, BUILD



Chairperson, BUILD

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Dated, 30 JAN 2024

BUSINESS INITIATIVE LEADING DEVELOPMENT (BUILD)
NOTES ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 June 2023

01.00 Background:

Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) is a Public Private Dialogue (PPD) platform to advocate research-backed business reforms to unlock investment constraints for the private sector as well as for social and economic development in Bangladesh. BUILD became an independent organization and registered under Trust Act 1882. DCCI, MCCI and CCCI are the authors of the Trust. In July, 2013, BUILD opened the Current Account at IFIC Bank Ltd. (A/C -1001-532376-001) which has been maintained by BUILD. On 07th January 2016, BUILD opened a separate Account in the name of Investment & Policy Summit 2016, Account No.of which is 1001-034060-031. However as per decision of the 21st Trustee Board Meeting, BUILD closed this account on 21st May, 2023 and the closing balance has been transferred to the current account of BUILD at IFIC Bank Ltd. Principal branch. On June 16, 2022 BUILD opened a Current Account in the name of Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) at the Sonali Bank Ltd. NCTB Branch, Dhaka, Account No.of which is 1601-402000-682.

Our scope of audit was BUILD's financial activities handled through 2 Current Bank Accounts & 1 Savings Bank Account at IFIC Bank Ltd. & Sonali Bank Ltd. from July 2022 - June' 2023.

Change of financial year for BUILD: As per decision of the 32nd Trustee Board Meeting of BUILD held on August 07, 2023 (virtually), BUILD will opt for July-June financial year for Audited accounts starting from the fiscal year 2022-2023 (July, 2022 - June, 2023).

01.01 Objectives

The main objectives of BUILD are as follows

- A.** To provide and operate as a forum for public private dialogue and to advocate and promote business environment reforms in Bangladesh, under the name of BUILD;
- B.** To act as the key private sector partner with the government of Bangladesh for the development of the business. in the country;
- C.** To conduct in-depth research and analysis on issues and constraints relating to the business environment in specific bottlenecks and solution;
- D.** To assist in the implementation of regulatory and other related reforms, and channel advocacy to the most appropriate stake holders;
- E.** To promote economic and social development in Bangladesh;
- F.** To undertake all activities for furtherance of any one or more of the objective of the organization as mentioned above.

02.00 Significance of accounting policies:

The Deed of Trust (Artical-10) of BUILD specifies as follows- The Management of The Trust Fund will be carried out in such a manner as decided and approved by the Board of Trustees and as a non profit organization. Operating surpluses, if any, will be used solely for the purposes of fulfilling the objectives of the Trust. The Trust shall maintain correct, up to date and complete books of account at its registered office. The Books of account shall always be open to inspection by any Trustee or other person authorized by the Board of Trustees at all time during regular office hour of the Trust.

02.01 Basis of accounting:

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) following historical cost convention which has been in conformity with the International Accounting Standards (IAS) adopted by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB).

02.02 Property, plant and equipment:

Property, plant and equipment are stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation in the Financial Statements.

02.03 Depreciation:

Depreciation on Fixed Asset is charged on reducing balance method at the rates ranging from 10% to 20% per annum depending on the estimated life of assets. Full years depreciation is charged on the addition to fixed asset irrespective of the date of acquisition thereof.

02.04 Revenue recognition:

All Grants and expenditure are accounted for on accrual basis and received related to the period subsequent to the year ended 30th June 2023.

02.05 Reporting currency:

BUILD maintains its Book of Accounts in Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) and all figures represented in the financial statement are in BDT.

02.06 Reporting period:

The audit report covers financial transactions up to 30th June 2023.

Notes No.	Particulars	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022

03.00 Property, Plant and Equipment:

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	5,238,366	913,634
Add: Addition during the year	137,337	4,576,939
Sub Total	5,375,703	5,490,573
Less: Depreciation charged during the year	985,214	204,289
Less: Disposal/Write off of Asset	13,465	47,918
Closing Balance	4,377,024	5,238,366

A detailed assets schedule is given in Annexure-A

04.00 Receivables:

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	100,000	120,000
Add: Addition During the year	10,102,404	79,350
Sub Total	10,202,404	199,350
Less: Adjustment during the year	8,948,404	99,350
Closing Balance	1,254,000	100,000

05.00 Advance:

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Add: Addition During the year	160,100	-
Sub Total	160,100	-
Less: Adjustment during the year	130,100	-
Closing Balance	30,000	-

06.00 FDR :

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	82,538,815	83,861,752
Addition during the year	8,998,813	1,034,649
Sub Total	91,537,628	84,896,402
Encashment during the year	3,718,265	2,357,587
Closing Balance	87,819,363	82,538,815

07.00 FDR Interest Recievable:

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	2,266,012	859,207
Addition during the year	2,514,481	2,266,012
Sub Total	4,780,493	3,125,219
Received during the year	2,266,012	859,207
Closing Balance	2,514,481	2,266,012

Notes No.	Particulars	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022

08.00 Advance Income Tax:

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Addition during the year	740,098	-
Sub Total	740,098	-
Adjustment during the year	740,098	-
Closing Balance	-	-

09.00 Cash and Cash Equivalent:

Cash in Hand (Including Imprest cash-BUILD)	2,748	25,994
Cash at Bank	1,446,808	12,399,957
Closing Balance	1,449,556	12,425,951

09.01 Cash at Bank:

BUILD A/C at IFIC Bank Limited	1,424,793	9,844,186
BUILD A/C at Sonali Bank Limited	22,015	1,655
Savings Account (Investment & Policy Summit 2016) at IFIC Bank Limited	-	2,554,116
Sub Total	1,446,808	12,399,957

10.00 Current Liability (Account Payable):

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	1,391,110	438,039
Addition during the year	12,268,038	6,247,037
Sub Total	13,659,148	6,685,076
Adjustment during the year	13,538,879	5,293,966
Closing Balance	120,269	1,391,110

10.01 Current Liability (Account Payable):

10.01.01	Staff Income Tax	-	61,650
10.01.02	VAT	-	1,377
10.01.03	AIT Payable	1,111	-
10.01.05	Postage & Courier	1,736	1,736
10.01.06	Repair & Maintainance	-	-
10.01.07	Advertising Expense	-	-
10.01.08	Newspaper	-	6,815
10.01.09	Telephone bill	2,422	2,004
10.01.10	Surcharge Expenses	-	-
10.01.11	Audit Fee	115,000	115,000
10.01.12	Office rent	-	-
10.01.13	Staff salary	-	873,721
10.01.14	Utility	-	-
10.01.15	Loan Received from CEO	-	328,808
10.01.16	Publication Expense	-	-
	Closing Balance	120,269	1,391,111

Notes No.	Particulars	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022

10.01.01 Out. Staff Income Tax /TDS

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	61,649	58,126
Addition during the year	835,243	375,672
Sub Total	896,892	433,798
Adjustment during the year	896,892	372,149
Closing Balance	(0)	61,649

11.01.02 Out. VAT

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	1,377	10,616
Addition during the year	60,831	183,399
Sub Total	62,208	194,015
Adjustment during the period	62,208	192,638
Prior year adjustment	-	-
Closing Balance	0	1,377

10.01.03 Out.AIT

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	(0)	13,294
Addition during the year	115,447	104,479
Sub Total	115,446	117,773
Adjustment during the period	114,335	117,884
Prior year Adjustment	-	111
Closing Balance	1,111	(0)

10.01.04 Out. Postage & Courier Bill

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	1,736	1,736
Addition during the year	-	-
Sub Total	1,736	1,736
Prior year adjustment during the year	-	-
Closing Balance	1,736	1,736

10.01.05 Out. Repair & Maintenance

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Addition during the year	13,759	-
Sub Total	13,759	-
Adjustment during the period	13,759	-
Closing Balance	-	-

Notes No.	Particulars	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022

10.01.06 Out.Advertising Expense

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Addition during the year	16,695	-
Sub Total	16,695	-
Adjustment during the period	16,695	-
Closing Balance	-	-

10.01.07 Out. Newspaper

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	6,815	2,152
Addition during the year	19,953	8,272
Sub Total	26,768	10,424
Adjustment during the period	26,768	3,609
Closing Balance	-	6,815

10.01.08 Out.Telephone Bill

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	2,004	509
Addition during the year	4,152	2,422
Sub Total	6,156	2,931
Adjustment during the period	3,734	927
Closing Balance	2,422	2,004

10.01.09 Out.Surcharge Expense

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	267,606
Addition during the year	-	-
Sub Total	-	267,606
Adjustment during the period	-	267,606
Closing Balance	-	-

10.01.10 Out.Audit Fee Expense

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	115,000	115,000
Addition during the year	57,500	57,500
Sub Total	172,500	172,500
Adjustment during the period	57,500	57,500
Closing Balance	115,000	115,000

Notes No.	Particulars	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022

10.01.11 Out.Office Rent

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Addition during the year	1,255,500	600,000
Sub Total	1,255,500	600,000
Adjustment during the period	1,255,500	600,000
Closing Balance	-	-

As per Rental deed agreement (2021-2022) & (2023-2024) between DCCI & BUILD, BUILD will pay monthly rental bill to the amount BDT 100,000/- & 1,15,000/ respectively to DCCI.

10.01.12 Out.Staff Salary

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	873,721	26,500
Addition during the year	9,419,319	4,361,596
Sub Total	10,293,040	4,388,096
Adjustment during the period	10,293,040	3,514,375
Closing Balance	-	873,721

10.01.13 Outstanding Utility Bill

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Addition during the year	223,344	78,807
Sub Total	223,344	78,807
Adjustment during the period	223,344	78,807
Closing Balance	-	-

10.01.14 Outstanding Internet Bill

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Addition during the year	49,440	34,674
Sub Total	49,440	34,674
Adjustment during the period	49,440	34,674
Closing Balance	-	-

Notes No.	Particulars	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022

10.01.15 Outstanding Publication Exp.

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Addition during the year	155,439	58,908
Sub Total	155,439	58,908
Adjustment during the period	155,439	58,908
Closing Balance	-	-

10.01.16 Loan Received from CEO

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	328,808	-
Addition during the year	41,417	328,808
Sub Total	370,225	328,808
Adjustment during the period	370,225	-
Closing Balance	(0)	328,808

11.00 Provision for Income Tax :

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	-	-
Addition during the year	1,740,971	-
Sub Total	1,740,971	-
Paid during the year	740,098	-
Closing Balance	1,000,872	-

12.00 Endowment Fund from the MoC:

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	72,537,043	72,455,530
Addition during the year	413,141	81,512
Sub Total	72,950,183	72,537,043
Adjustment during the year	-	-
Closing Balance	72,950,183	72,537,043

13.00 Retained Earning :

Opening balance as on 01.07.2022	28,640,992	16,910,752
Addition during the year	(5,267,893)	11,730,352
Sub Total	23,373,099	28,641,103
Prior year adjustment	-	111
Closing Balance	23,373,099	28,640,992



Notes No.	Particulars	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022

14.00 Contribution Received/Research Income:

Contribution Received from IFC:	8,218,004	13,799,172
Contribution received from NCC Bank Ltd.:	100,000	60,000
Cont. Received from C3ER, Brac University	1,154,000	-
Contribution Received from Austrian Trade Commission	624,568	285,523
Contribution from Land O'Lakes BD A/C	-	1,100,000
Contribution Received from UNIDO:	-	60,000
Contribution from ITC	-	1,526,401
Contribution Income From IDG,USAID	-	-
Contribution From ILO	-	-
Total	10,096,572	16,831,096

15.00 Interest Income :

Endowment Fund Interest	4,636,417	2,192,380
BUILD FDR Interest	936,904	285,857
Bank Interest from IAPS-16 A/C	40,613	25,327
Total	5,613,934	2,503,564

16.00 Other income:

Sale of Book	2,500	3,000
Foreign exchange Gain	5,831	24,397
Sale of Asset	-	-
Gain on Asset Disposal	-	4,798
Total	8,331	32,196

17.00 Salaries & Allowances

Salaries & Allowances	12,185,394	5,594,489
Total	12,185,394	5,594,489

Notes No.	Particulars	Amount in Taka	
		30.06.2023	30.06.2022

18.00 Administrative Expenses:

Repair Maintenance - Office	49,141	19,630
Printing & Stationery	73,285	81,750
Advertising Expense	20,000	-
Entertainment	61,705	24,435
Conveyance	78,448	20,598
Event expenses	2,482,484	24,600
Registration fee	46,501	-
Internet bill	50,400	25,200
Telephone bill	4,152	2,422
Communication	4,454	3,132
Utility	223,344	78,807
Research expenses	17,551	31,660
Festival Bonus	1,126,614	352,550
Postage, stamp, Courier	1,170	550
Newspaper and Periodicals	19,953	8,272
Consultancy Fee (For BUILD HR Policy)	107,333	-
Design Expense	-	-
VAT on Fees/Charges (From Bank A/C)	120	15
Tax Deduction at Source	-	110,000
VAT	-	165,000
Miscellaneous	36,283	9,852
Network Connectivity Exp.	78,307	-
Excise duty	80,000	3,000
Tax on Agency Commission	-	-
Tax on Interest A/C	-	119,093
Audit fee	57,500	57,500
Bank charge	5,874	1,145
Foreign exchange loss	8,031	5,148
Office Rent	1,290,000	600,000
Publication Expense	140,000	60,000
Excursion Tour Exp.	-	-
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Asset	12,502	33,366
Depreciation	985,214	204,289
Total	7,060,366	2,042,015

19.00 Income Tax Expense

Income Tax Expense	1,740,971	-
Total	1,740,971	-



Annexure-A

BUSINESS INITIATIVE LEADING DEVELOPMENT (BUILD)
SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

As on 30 June 2023

SL	Particulars	ASSET COST				DEPRECIATION					Written Down Value (WDV) as on 30.06.2023
		Balance as on 30.06.2022	Addition during the year	Adjustment during the year	Balance as on 30.06.2023	Rate of Dep.	Balance as on 01.07.2022	Charged during the Year	Adjustment during the year	Balance as on 30.06.2023	
	2	3	4	5	6=(3+4-5)	%	8	9=(6-8)*7%	10	11=(8+9+10)	12=(6-11)
1	Furniture and Fixture										
	Furniture	1,065,896	97,520	(6,134)	1,157,282	10%	400,533	68,658	(3,899)	465,292	691,990
2	Air Cooler										
	Air Cooler	1,171,700	-	-	1,171,700	20%	418,945	150,551	-	569,496	602,204
	Refrigerator	34,730	-	-	34,730	10%	15,808	1,892	-	17,700	17,030
3	Computer and Machinery										
	Router	23,500	-	-	23,500	20%	9,347	2,831	-	12,178	11,322
	Camera	30,000	-	-	30,000	20%	25,470	906	-	26,376	3,624
	Telephone Set	3,300	-	-	3,300	20%	2,492	162	-	2,653	647
	Laser Jet Printer	99,600	-	-	99,600	20%	78,728	4,174	-	82,902	16,698
	Desktop Computer	530,945	-	(84,400)	446,545	20%	454,567	13,220	(73,169)	394,619	51,926
	Laptop & Projector set	381,050	-	-	381,050	20%	195,836	37,043	-	232,879	148,171
	Photocopier Machine	238,000	-	-	238,000	20%	209,251	5,750	-	215,000	23,000
	UPS	8,270	-	-	8,270	20%	5,134	627	-	5,761	2,509
	Stapler	1,600	-	-	1,600	20%	953	129	-	1,083	517
	Water Purifier Machine	11,350	-	-	11,350	20%	6,825	905	-	7,730	3,620
	Table Fan	2,550	-	-	2,550	15%	1,077	221	-	1,298	1,252
	Stand Fan	4,900	-	-	4,900	20%	4,234	133	-	4,367	533
	Microwave Oven	16,860	-	-	16,860	20%	8,104	1,751	-	9,855	7,005
	Vacuum Cleaner	8,500	-	-	8,500	20%	7,217	257	-	7,473	1,027
	Voice Recorder	-	6,000	-	6,000	10%	-	500	-	500	5,500
	Fire Extinguisher	-	6,200	-	6,200	15%	-	59	-	59	6,141
4	Interior Design/Decoration										
	Renovation	3,532,736	27,617	-	3,560,353	20%	82,599	695,445	-	778,044	2,782,309
	TOTAL	7,165,487	137,337	(90,534)	7,212,290		1,927,120	985,214	(77,069)	2,835,266	4,377,024

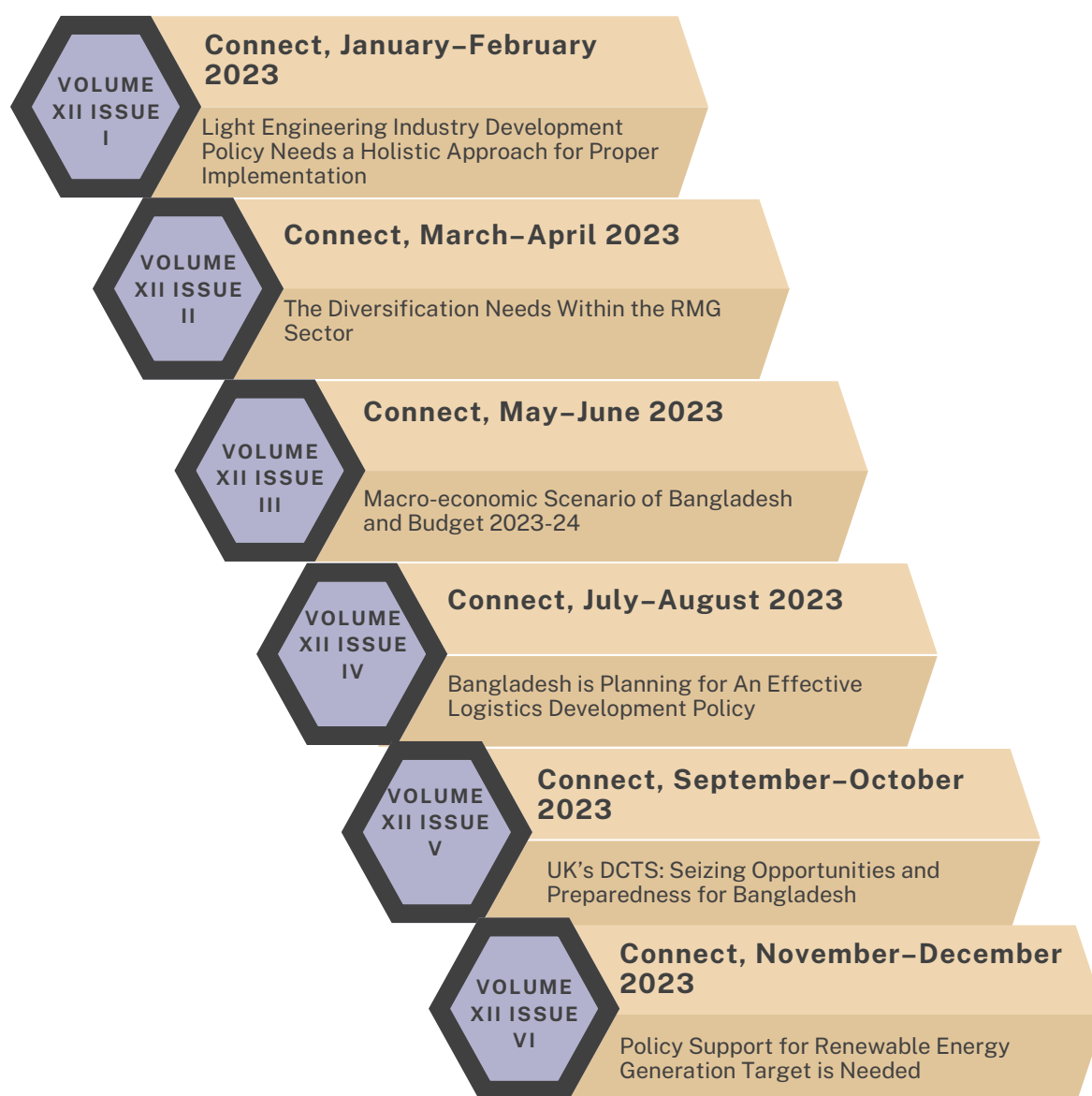
13. Publications by BUILD

BUILD has established itself as a prominent source of important publications that contribute to promoting private-sector development and uplifting the country's business and investment climate. These publications play a vital role in shaping policies, disseminating knowledge, and fostering informed discussions among stakeholders.

13.1 Connect – The BUILD Newsletter

Stay connected and informed with the pulse of private sector development by subscribing to our bi-monthly newsletter, Connect. This newsletter serves as a comprehensive source of insights, strategies, case studies, and news related to the private sector, ensuring that you are always up to date with the latest trends and developments in the business landscape. Connect is available for free here: <https://buildbd.org/newsletter>. Meticulously crafted, drawing upon extensive research and analysis conducted by BUILD, editorials in Connect serve as a platform for BUILD to present its well-reasoned and substantiated opinions and justifications on ongoing economic issues of the country.

13.2 Editorials for Connect in 2023



13.3 Regulatory Guidebooks

BUILD's commitment to providing valuable resources extends to the publication of industry-leading, one-of-a-kind regulatory guides. These guides serve as comprehensive references that navigate the intricate regulatory frameworks governing various sectors of the economy. Some of these guides are:

- Business Start-Up Licenses: A Regulatory Guide
- Fish and Fisheries: Business Start-Up Licenses: A Regulatory Guide
- Leather and Leather Goods: Business Start-Up Licenses: A Regulatory Guide
- Pharmaceuticals: Business Start-Up Licenses: A Regulatory Guide

13.4 Other Publications

- “De-carbonisation and Circularity for the Sustainability of the Clothing Sector in Bangladesh.”
- “Potential of Assembling of Industrial Robots for Different Industrial Sectors of Bangladesh”
- “DFQF Market Access to China-Policies and Measures to Increase and Diversify Exports”
- “UK’s DCTS: Policy Measures to Escalate Export to the UK”
- Budget Proposal 2023-24
- MPS HI24 Targets and Achievements

13.5 Articles in National Dailies

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14. Partners and affiliation of BUILD

Founding Organizations



Affiliations



Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)



www.buildbd.org
facebook.com/buildbdorg
flickr.com/buildbd
cutt.ly/buildbdyoutube

15. Secretariat of BUILD

Ferdaus Ara Begum
Chief Executive Officer

 Moshaddek Alam Additional Director: Communication and Advocacy	 Fahmida Jabeen Consultant
 Kanis Fatama Senior Research Associate Trade and Investment Working Committee	 Md Mahmud Hussain Senior IT Consultant
 Mehedi Hasan Senior Research Associate Sustainability and Green Growth Working Committee	 Ahmed Julker Nine Research Associate Logistics and Infrastructure Development Working Committee
 Nasib Ul Amin Senior Research Associate Taxation Working Committee	 Tanjila Marjahan Research Associate SME Development Working Committee
 Md Nooruzzaman Senior Research Associate Taxation Working Committee	 Asif Haider Research Associate Financial Sector Development Working Committee
 Shahriar Rawshon Research Associate Financial Sector Development Working Committee	 Pallab Biswas Senior Admin Associate
 Md. Nazim Uddin Senior Research Associate Logistics and Infrastructure Development Working Committee	 Mohammad Nurunnabi Office Assistant
 Md. Shafat Hossain Research Associate SME Working Committee	 Mintu Chandra Das Office Assistant

SHORT-TERM CONSULTANTS

1	Md Tahmid Zami Consultant, Sustainability, Green Growth and Climate Change	9	Nazmul Islam Chowdhury Consultant
2	Nusrat Jahan Tania Business Confidence Survey, Business Licensing Guidebook	10	Md. Joynal Abdin Consultant, 4IR ICT
3	Dr Syed Humayun Kabir Standards and Certifications	11	Alamgir Kabir HR Consultant
4	Shakib Quoreshi Logistics Sector Development	12	Masum Gazi Tax Consultant
5	Azim Syed Logistics Development	13	Ziaur Rahman Consultant Jute Sector
6	Shegufta Ahmed Women Entrepreneurship Development		
7	Md. Rokonzaman, FCA Tax Consultant, ACNABIN Chartered Accountants		
8	Rehana Akter Ruma HR Consultant		