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Final Programme Narrative Report on Activities Implemented under the Joint Programme “Union Parishad Governance Programme (UPGP)” in Bangladesh

**Report of the Administrative Agent
for the period December 2011 - December 2016
Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office**

Bureau of Management
United Nations Development Programme
GATEWAY: <http://mptf.undp.org>

16 March 2017



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**UNION PARISHAD GOVERNANCE PROJECT (UPGP)
MPTF OFFICE GENERIC FINAL PROGRAMME NARRATIVE REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: DECEMBER 2011 – DECEMBER 2016**

<p align="center">Programme Title & Project Number</p> <p>Programme Title: Union Parishad Governance Project Programme Number in Atlas: 00080905 MPTF Office Project Reference Number:00081864</p>	<p align="center">Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results</p> <p><i>Country/Region :</i> Bangladesh</p>
<p align="center">Participating Organization(s)</p> <p>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)</p>	<p>Priority area / strategic results: Democratic Governance <i>Government institutions at the national and sub-national levels are able to more effectively carry out their mandates, including delivery of public services, in a more accountable, transparent, and inclusive manner.</i></p>
<p align="center">Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p> <p>Total approved budget as per project document: US\$ 18,391,108</p> <p>MPTF /JP Contribution: <i>by Agency (if applicable)</i> UNDP & UNCDF: US\$ 5,496,823</p> <p><i>Contribution by Agency</i> UNDP : 2,500,000 UNCDF: 1,500,000</p> <p>Other Contributions (donors) <i>(if applicable)</i> EU UNDP & UNCDF: US\$ 8,081,655</p> <p>Revised Total Project Budget: 17,578,478</p> <p>Note: 1. UNDP commitment increased by \$500,000 2. Currency loss is \$(1,312,630) under EU & DANIDA contribution.</p>	<p align="center">Implementing Partners</p> <p>Local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives</p>
<p align="center">Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.</p> <p>Evaluation Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: 04/12/2014 Mid-Term Evaluation Report – <i>if applicable please attach</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Date: 01/04/2017 (draft)</p>	<p align="center">Programme Duration</p> <p>Overall Duration (<i>months</i>) 60 months</p> <p>Original End Date (<i>dd.mm.yyyy</i>) 30/11/2016</p> <p>Actual End Date (<i>dd.mm.yyyy</i>) 31/12/2016</p> <p>Have agency (ies) operationally closed the Program in its (their) system? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Expected Financial Closure Date: 30 June 2017</p>
	<p align="center">Report Submitted By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Name: Sudipto Mukherjee o Title: Country Director o Participating Organization (Lead): UNDP and UNCDF o Email address: sudipto.mukherjee@undp.org

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CO	Country Office
CPD	Country Programme Document
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDLG	Deputy Director, Local Government
EU	European Union
JP	Joint Programme
LGD	Local Government Division
LGI	Local Governance Institution
LGSP II	Local Governance Support Programme II
LGSP - LIC	Local Governance Support Project - Learning and Innovation Component
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoLGRDC	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives
NPD	National Project Director
PM	Project Manager
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	Union Parishad
UPGP	Union Parishad Governance Project
UZGP	Upazila Parishad Governance Project
WDF	Women Development Forum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Final Programme Narrative Report under the Joint Programme (JP), “Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP)”, implementing by Local Government Division (LGD) in Bangladesh covers the period from December 2011¹ to December 2016.

Despite delays in implementing the project due to UP elections in 2016; political disturbances in 2013 and 2014; and more than 6 months delay in commencement of the project; MIS data indicates that JP has achieved most of the targeted results in line with the expected JP outcome of “strengthened capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development service delivery for the MDGs”.

Citizen participation has become the core component of UP planning and budgeting, including engaging women, marginalized and vulnerable people, and minority groups. Overall, the local government institutions have improved their services to the local community people. About 53% of citizens are satisfied with the overall performance of the Union Parishad, compared to 44% in the baseline (IPRS-2015).

The Ward Shava (WS) has been institutionalized in accordance with the UP Act 2009, and has emerged as a strong community platform for participatory planning and for citizens to exercise influence on decision-making at the grass root level. About 54% of UPs conduct WSs twice a year in each of their 9 wards in 2016 compared to 35% in baseline. The study on WS 2016 reported that WSs provided grass-root communities the opportunity to raise their voices and put their demands to the UPs. About 80% of the general population of the targeted UPs reported that they have spoken freely without fear in the most recent WS they attended (Study on Effectiveness of Ward Shava-2015).

The UP-Standing Committees (SC) demonstrate increased and sustained compliance with their mandated roles and responsibilities including citizen and civil society engagement. Study on SC 2016 highlighted that the community practice of seeking help from members of the local power structure and political figures, though still prevalent, is gradually being replaced by inputs from institutional entities like members of SC, especially the women members of UP. This change, to a great extent, is a reflection of a gradual citizens’ trust and confidence placed broadly on UP and also could partly be attributed to the growing role of SCs.

Open budget sessions at UP level with community representatives have been integrated as a key part of planning processes, ensuring that budgeting is pro poor and focused on the priorities of all people. Annual open budget meetings were held across 76% of UPs in 2016, whereas it was 98% in 2015 compared to 87% in baseline, which is a strong sign of increasing accountability of UPs to their citizens. The percentage of budget meeting slightly declined in 2016 due to six phases UP election that overlapped the budget preparation and sharing period. All targeted UPs now develop their five-year plan through a participatory process with 58% aligning with the MDGs/SDGs compared to 90% in baseline. Pro-poor service delivery is supported by 69% of UPs now holding up-to-date list of poor households compared to 33% in baseline.

¹ The project actually started its operations in June 2012

Key results on policy front include the approval of 7 Rules of which two Rules are under scrutiny with the Government. This is a pivotal achievement in supporting effective decentralization under the UP Act 2009. A comprehensive National Framework for the local Government Capacity Development has been developed for improvement of capacity with consistency and efficiency across the local government institutions. A systematic oversight of performance of UPs was strengthened through using MIS and Accounting system for their day to day activities.

Over 4,709,681 people including the rural poor (over 44% women) have benefited from the performance based financial investment to 400 UPs and implemented 4,630 local development schemes amounting BDT 52.97 crore between 2012 to 2016-17 FY. Significant improvements in Union Parishads' own-source revenue is evident, with an average revenue increase of 115% between 2012 and 2016 vis-à-vis greater spending on services that are pro-poor and responsive to the needs of citizens. Financial discipline in the Union Parishads has improved significantly with most of the UPs now have updated tax assessment and collection registers.

I. Purpose

The specific purpose of the Union Parishad Governance Project (UPGP) is to improve the functional and institutional capacity and democratic accountability of Union Parishads through increased citizen involvement by activating various statutory forums at UP level to foster participatory local development and services. These UPGP objectives are aligned effectively with strategic goal of United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) for Bangladesh and the objectives of the Local Government Division (LGD). The UPGP is basically working to achieve several results, such as improve governance of the Union Parishad; promote peoples' participation in planning and budgeting, implementation, monitoring, supervision and evaluation of development activities; deliver improved and enhanced basic services to the citizen; increase local resource generation to complement government efforts; promote women participation in the affairs of Union Parishad; strengthen capacity of the UPs to perform their functions assigned by the UP Act 2009 effectively, efficiently; and promote accountability and transparency in the management of UP activities.

The three key results envisaged to be achieved by UPGP are:

- Strengthened Democratic Accountability of Union Parishads through Citizen Engagement
- Innovation in Pro-Poor & MDG-Oriented Planning & Financing of Service Delivery by UPs
- Strengthened national capacity for effective policy review, monitoring, lesson learning and capacity development of Local Government Institutions for enhanced Local Governance

II. Assessment of Programme Results

i) Narrative Reporting on Results:

Outcomes: Over the five year period (2012-2016) the project has achieved targeted results in relation to the expected JP outcome of “strengthened capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development service delivery for the MDGs”. The JP’s partnership with Upazila Governance Project (UZGP) in 14 Upazilas has resulted improved local planning and establishing 551 Women Development Forums with 16,000 members have been providing a strong force for influencing local governance. The key results on policy front were approval of 7 Rules by the Government and 2 Rules are under scrutiny with the Government are supporting effective decentralization under the UP Act 2009. A comprehensive National Framework for the Local Government capacity development has developed for improvement of capacity with consistency and efficiency across the local government institutions. Also, the project supported to develop a Monitoring, Inspection and Evaluation (MIE) strategy for the MIE Wing of LGD, which would enable LGD to monitor the performance of UPs effectively and efficiently. A systematic oversight of performance of UPs was strengthened through using MIS and Accounting system for their day to day activities.

The UPGP capacity development support through trainings, workshops, study visit/peer learning, backstopping support etc. has resulted significant improvement in compliance with democratic accountability enshrined in the UP Act 2009 with most of UPs complying with three norms of democratic leadership and oversight. MIS data suggest that the percentage of UPs are holding the general monthly meeting rose to 95% (from 89% in baseline). People’s participation and engagement in local governance processes at the UP level, reflected in Ward Shavas (WS) reached

higher levels over the project period. About 54% of UPs organized two Ward Shavas in all 9 wards in 2016 which is significantly higher compared to baseline (35%) in 2012. About 76% of the UPs in the project area arranged Open Budget Session during the last fiscal year. According to IPRS-2015 in the UPGP area 98% of UPs have organized Open Budget Meeting compared to 87% in baseline. Open budget sessions overlapped with the UP election (February-July) 2016, where the UPs were busy for their election campaign-leading to a less attention to organizing the open budget session.

The UPGP has made a significant progress in strengthening Standing Committees (SC) of UPs that the engagements of the SCs with the elected members have now become more active specially the 6 key SCs that play a strategic role for pro-poor sectoral planning. 100% of UPs in the project area had 13 SCs fully operational, which is significantly higher compared to baseline (74%) in 2013. Most of the UPs (96%) have at least 3 SCs headed by a female ward member. The MIS data suggests that 69% of UPs in project area had at least six SCs holding bi-monthly meeting regularly which is more than double compared to baseline (28%) in 2013. About 64% of the targeted SCs produced recommendations for UP planning and budgeting in 2016.

All targeted UPs now develop their five-year plan through a participatory process. About 99% of UPs have operational Five Year Development Plan with 58% aligning with the MDGs/SDGs. Pro-poor service delivery is supported by 69% of UPs now holding up-to-date list of poor households.

Considering 2016 as the beginning year of SDG implementation, the project emphasized that the five-year development plans be updated to become pro-poor and SDG focused. Further, UPGP's effort has resulted professional documentation and publication of the Five Year Development Plan Books and Tax Assessment Books completed in all 564 UPs. This is probably the first ever in the history of the UPs that they are putting together a standard and printed Plan Books, which would enable UPs to systematically use these documents while networking with various agencies and maintain the legacy for future development.

Annual performance of local government institutions has improved and is supported by an Extended Performance Based Grants (EPBG) system. Performance grants associated with the annual performance assessment of UPs have become an important catalyst for the achievement of pro-poor development planning, MDGs/SDGs service delivery, and increased mobilization of own source revenue. Local development projects are implemented through EPBG to directly support progress on MDGs/ SDGs, focusing on areas of rural infrastructure, agriculture, health, water and sanitation, education, skills development etc. Over 4,709,681 people including the rural poor (over 44% women) have benefited from the financial investments, through support to more than 5,000 local development schemes across 400 UPs with the performance based grants of BDT 52.97 crore between 2012 to 2016-17.

Project support for preparation of the Standard Tax Assessment Book in all 564 UPs in the project area including various pragmatic and contextually adapted initiatives have contributed to increase local revenue generation by 115% (BDT 105,870 to 217,922) compared to 76% (BDT 101,348 to 185,879) in control area over the project period (Trends in Union Parishad Revenue Collection:2016). Around 90% of the UPs allocated 30% of the budget for women development schemes.

Output 1: Strengthened Democratic Accountability and transparency of the Union Parishads through Citizen Engagement

The project has responded by focusing on individual capacity building of elected public representatives, government officials and other key stakeholders for more effective functioning of local government institutions in compliance with the UP Act 2009 and other Rules and Regulations. Different types of training programs have built essential knowledge, skills and improved abilities sets in planning, budgeting, financial management, public procurement Rules, SDGs, monitoring and evaluation, leadership etc. General and specialized training has been provided to 106,689 elected public representatives and government officials including 23% women, enhancing understanding of the UP functionaries in legal, administrative and institutional functions and their corresponding roles. Very specially, 7,197 newly elected UP functionaries were familiarized with the UP Act 2009 soon after oath taking and prepared to take up their responsibilities through a training on rules and regulations and functions of UP in 2016. Besides formal trainings/orientations, the project provided backstopping support to all 564 UPs in the form of reflective learning through coaching and mentoring by in-person visit to UPs, discussion and information sharing using skype and over phone and periodic meetings, which enabled UPs to reflect systematically and align their approaches and practices in line with the rules, regulations and procedures. These efforts have significantly enhanced UPs institutional abilities to perform their functions efficiently, particularly in the context of the election and transition to newly elected leadership.

The Ward Shava (meeting) has been institutionalized in accordance with the UP Act 2009, and has emerged as a strong community platform for participatory planning and for citizens to exercise influence on decision-making at the Union Parishad level. All the 564 UPs were technically and financially supported which contributed to activate 5,076 Ward Shavas. About 80% of Union Parishads conduct Ward Shavas twice a year in each of their 9 wards. About 464,012 community people (male-318,285; Female-144,727) participated in ward shavas during 2016 and contributed to their local development plan.

The results in relation to the second key platform for citizen engagement at the UPs are the Standing Committee (SC) is also encouraging. The UPGP has made a significant progress in strengthening SCs of UPs specially the 6 key SCs that play a strategic role for pro-poor sectoral planning. 100% of UPs in the project area had 13 SCs fully operational, which is significantly higher compared to baseline (74%) in 2013. Most of the UPs (96%) have at least 3 SCs headed by a female ward member. In this connection, all 564 UPs were supported by the project, which facilitated the formation of 7,337 SCs after the 2016 election, and followed by delivery of capacity building training to 24,023 members of key 6 SCs on pro-poor planning.

The project made a major effort to strengthen peer to peer learning as part of the capacity development effort. In addition to visits to UPs which had successfully introduced significant improvements and innovations, the project invested in quarterly peer interaction platforms. The project organised quarterly coordination and peer learning meeting on regular basis chaired by the concerned Deputy commissioner at district level with the participation of all UP Chairmen, Secretaries, UNOs, concerned NGOs and line department Government officials. The meeting

helped to gear up the various activities to facilitate development of UPs and created opportunity for peer learning.

The Women Development Forum (WDF) has been established by UPGP, along with UZGP, an empowerment tool for women specially elected women representatives and a democratic platform to ensure a gendered approach to local democracy. 551 WDFs have been established between 2012 and 2016 (487 at the Upazila level and 64 at the District level). 100% of Union Parishads have at least one elected female representative participating in the WDF at the Upazila level. 16,000 women are now members of a Forum, providing a strong force for influencing local governance. It connects and integrates elected female members with local government institutions, and has developed as a key structure in strengthening the accountability and inclusiveness of local governance.

Output 2: Strengthened innovations in Pro-Poor and MDG-Oriented Planning, Financing and Implementation of Service Delivery by Union Parishads

Remarkable progress has been demonstrated by Union Parishads under this result area. All targeted UPs now develop their five-year plan through a participatory process while 99% of the UPs in the project area having operational five years development plans, of which all are updated to become pro-poor and elaborated to align with MDGs/SDGs and national five year development plan. Further, UPGP's special effort has resulted professional documentation and publication of the Five Year Development Plan Books in all 564 UPs. This is probably the first ever effort in the history of the UPs that they have put together a standard and printed Plan Books, which would enable UPs to systematically use these documents while networking with various agencies and maintain the legacy for future development.

Open budget sessions with community representatives have been integrated as a key part of planning processes, ensuring that budgeting is pro poor and focused on the priorities of all people. Most of the UPs organise annual open budget meetings while 76% of the UPs organised this meeting in 2016. Open planning and budgeting ensures local government institutions are increasingly accountable to their citizens. Other important instrument for transparency promoted by the project, around 92 % of UPs disclosed the Annual Income and Expenditure report to public on the UP notice board compared to 62% in the baseline. Training on financial Rules and regulations, budgeting, asset management, tax determination, annual accounts and auditing, revenue collection, procurement, documentation and reporting contributed to better financial management.

The performance based grants of value of about BDT 52.97 crore were delivered to the best performing 400 UPs, and utilized for more than 5,000 local development schemes between 2012 to 2016-17 of which more than 58% were oriented towards MDGs/SDGs focusing on the areas of infrastructure, health, education, water and sanitation, skill development etc. Over 4,709,681 people including the rural poor (over 44% women) have indirectly benefited from these schemes and about 80,000 people have directly benefited through employment generation (over 38% women). Around 90% of the UPs allocated 30% of the budget for women development oriented schemes.

Significant improvements in Union Parishads' own-source revenue collection is evident, with an average revenue increase of 115% (BDT 105,870 to 217,922) compared to 75.57% (BDT 101,348 to 185,879) in control area between 2012 and 2016 vis-à-vis greater spending on services that are pro-poor and responsive to the needs of citizens. Financial discipline in the Union Parishads has improved significantly; 98% of UPs now have updated tax assessment and tax collection registers (58% in control areas, 19% in 2012), and 81% now maintain a tax default register. The UPGP support for preparing the Standard Tax Assessment Book in all 564 UPs in the project area, has contributed to the various pragmatic and contextually adapted initiatives to boost-up revenue generation.

Output 3: Strengthened technical capacity of Local Government Division for effective policy review, monitoring, lesson learning and capacity development of LGIs for enhanced Local Governance

Both UPGP and UZGP have formed a Policy Advisory Group (PAG) through the Local Government Division headed by Secretary, LGD and membership from academia, civil society, experts from different development organizations, training institutions and LGIs. Reconstruction of the PAG is seeing enhanced focus on policy development oriented towards improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the local government. The PAG has played a key role in reviewing the outputs of the project and suggesting for further improvements and necessary interventions. As a result, the project has achieved tremendous success on policy front with approval of 7 Rules by the Government-UP Tax Rules; UP Budget preparation and approval Rules; UP Power & Functions of Chairmen and Members Rules; UP Power & Special Functions of Reserved Female Members Rules; UP Inspection Procedures and Inspectors' Powers Rules; UP Official and Employee Recruitment and Service Condition Rules; and UP Regulations which would improve the performance of union Parishad. Another, 2 instruments (Village Court Rules, 2014; Birth & Death Registration Rules, 2015) were finalized, which are under scrutiny with the government.

In addition, the project assisted to formulate the National Capacity Development Framework (NCDF) for LGIs. Successful implementation of the strategies will increase capacity and performance across the local government institutions and contribute to achieve Government's 7th five year plan and SDGs. Also, the project supported to develop a Monitoring, Inspection and Evaluation (MIE) strategy for the MIE Wing of LGD, which would increase capacity of LGD to monitor the performance of UPs effectively and efficiently.

Systematic oversight of performance of UPs was further strengthened through development of web-based MIS and Accounting system for all the targeted 564 UPs. Operationally, most UPs are now using MIS system for their day to day activities like tax assessment and collection, updating regular cash flow, household information and quarterly reporting.

Qualitative Assessment

Notwithstanding the project implementation was adjusted due to election in 2016; civil and political disturbances in 2013 and 2014; and delay in commencement, it is clearly evident from

the results indicated by various studies and MIS data, that the project has achieved significant results. The cooperation of the UP functionaries and strong support of the LGD helped accelerate targeted achievements.

Significant progress has been achieved in relation to the developing Functional and Institutional capacity for overall compliance with administrative requirements of UP Act 2009 by UPs in terms regular conduct of UP Monthly Meetings, establishing all 13 Standing Committees, conducting 2 Ward Shavas per year in 9 wards, putting Five year plans to use, carrying out Open budget meeting annually, and having a Citizen Charter. The elected members have taken bigger role and working closely with the UP Chairperson and Secretaries compared to the past. Civic engagement activated through rural grass root citizen's direct participation in the local planning process by Ward Shava and they also are involved in the innovations.

The study on Ward Shavas (2016) reported that "UPGP support to Ward Shavas provided grass-root communities the opportunity to raise their voice and put their demands to the UPs. About 80% of the general population of the UPs in the UPGP area reported that they have spoken freely without fear in the most recent WS they attended. The impacts of WSs were varied and wide ranging. The major results reported were systematic recording of people's developmental demand and wishes at the grass root levels; improvements in the system of service delivery; ensuring transparency and accountability of the public representatives i.e., improving governance; increasing awareness of the general public regarding their role in UP system; preparing priority list of the development programs; transmission of developmental program's list to the UP before holding its open annual meeting; and, improvement of skill and capacity of the UP".

The findings of the study on SC highlighted that engagements of the Standing Committees with the elected members have now become more active. Community practice of seeking help from members of the local power structure and political figures, though still prevalent, is gradually being replaced by inputs from institutional entities like members of SC, especially the women members of UP. This change, to a great extent, is a reflection of a gradual citizens' trust and confidence placed broadly on UP and also could partly be attributed to the growing role of SCs. This finding reveals a big step forward in promoting pro-poor planning, transparency and accountability at the local level.

Study on Civic Engagement reported that improvement in the performance of project UPs in two important areas of governance – transparency and accountability and democratic governance are noticeable. In all UPs in the project areas, UDCs are operating with vigor, while public involvement in project supervision has increased. Women Members were found to be extremely active in the Project UPs; in fact, they appeared to be full-timers, spending almost the whole day in the UP premises. Women in non-project UPs were also seen to be active, although not to the extent their counterparts in project areas. Training on sewing and the supply of sewing machines have helped many women not only to become self-reliant; many of them now work as UPGP ambassadors, conveying the message of UPGP to women and other groups and trying to motivate others to follow suit.

There is greater focus on poor households in scheme identification, which is an important indicator that local governance is becoming pro-poor. Further, most the UPs are allocating around one third

of their budget for women development and mostly implemented by elected women representatives is another signal of promoting gender equality. Block grant financing has supported schemes in education, health, agriculture, fishery management, and helping people to access economic opportunities – in addition to small-scale infrastructure projects traditionally supported by local government. The schemes benefited approximately 4,709,681 people including the rural poor and specially women (44%) and around 80,000 people were directly benefited through employment generation, which validate the findings of the Civic Engagement that “UPGP schemes also created employment opportunities for women and men; women, like men, were also beneficiaries of such schemes. Some differences in the expenditure pattern were also found. Initially some UPs spent UPGP funds for construction. But they changed their behaviour subsequently, focusing now on social/MDG sectors”.

The WDF is an empowerment tool for women and a democratic platform to ensure a gendered approach to local democracy - has come to play an active role in the everyday social and economic well-being of women and girls, intervening in issues of violence against women and forced early marriage. WDF members have had a direct role in stopping 892 early marriages and 440 dowry transfer; they have also addressed 293 cases of sexual violence and 568 cases of other gender-based violence, in cooperation with local administration. Importantly, the WDF has led awareness raising in the community against sexual, domestic and gender-based violence, through trainings and campaigns.

Various pragmatic and contextually adapted initiatives has resulted improvement of local revenue mobilization by the UPs more than doubled in the working area of JP over the project period. People pay revenue often when they trust their local government and this is probably the strongest sign that local governance has improved and they have gained further public trust.

Significant results have been achieved on policy front with approval of seven Rules by the Government. In addition, two instruments are under scrutiny with the government. Successful implementation of these Rules would help improve local governance and will bring transparency and accountability in UP functions and service delivery. A comprehensive national framework for Local Government Capacity Development has increased the discipline, consistency and efficiency across the local government institutions. Monitoring, Inspection and Evaluation (MIE) strategy for the MIE Wing of LGD would help to improve performance of the LGD and to achieve Government’s 7th five-year plan and SDGs.

ii) Indicator Based Performance Assessment:

	<u>Achieved</u> Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Means of Verification
Outcome 1: Strengthened capacities of local governments and other stakeholders to foster participatory local development service delivery for the MDGs			
Indicator 1: Secondary legislation instruments (Rules & Regulations) required by UP Act 09 are operational Baseline (2012):0 Planned End of Project Target: 12 (revised 9)	9	The project initially drove on developing twelve Rules while during the formulation process two have been dropped, and two have been combined. The UPGP support has resulted 7 Rules have been approved by the Government and 2 Rules are under scrutiny with the Government.	Rules published by LGD
Indicator 2: Overall compliance with administrative requirements of UP Act 09 by project-supported UPs Baseline (2012): 33% (UP Meetings & Ward Shavas) Planned End of Project Target:80%	54%	The six phases UP election (February-July) in 2016, where the UPs were busy for their election campaign-leading to a lack of attention to organising Ward Shava has resulted target yet to be achieved.	UPGP MIS
Indicator 3: % of women/men (which also include Dalits and Indigenous People) who have attended at least one participatory planning meeting (Ward Shava) Baseline (2012) : 8% Planned End of Project Target: 50% over baseline	36%		Interim Project Result Assessment Survey, 2015
Indicator 4: % citizens who have responded that they are very satisfied with service delivery by their UP			Interim Project Result Assessment Survey, 2015

Baseline (2012) : 6% Planned End of Project Target: 33%	53%		
Output 1: Strengthened Democratic Accountability and transparency of the Union Parishads through Citizen Engagement			
Indicator 1.1: % of Ward Shavas that transact business according to UP Act 09 (2 Ward Shavas in all 9 wards) Baseline (2012) : 33% Planned End of Project Target: 50%	54%		UPGP MIS
Indicator 1.2: % of target UPs with at least 6 key standing committee producing at least 2 monitoring reports per year Baseline (2012): 28% Planned End of Project Target: 50%	58%		UPGP MIS
Indicator 1.3: % targeted UPs which have at least 1 woman representative participating in officially registered Women Development Forum at the Upazila Level Baseline (2012) : 61% Planned End of Project Target: 100%	100%		UPGP MIS
Output 2: Strengthened innovations in Pro-Poor and MDG-Oriented Planning, Financing and Implementation of Service Delivery by Union Parishads			
Indicator 2.1: % of targeted UPs have completed comprehensive development plans responding to local MDG assessments that will have also identified needs of the locally relevant most vulnerable groups Baseline (2012) : 71% Planned End of Project Target: 90%	93%		UPGP MIS
Indicator 2.2: Targeted UPs allocate % of block grant funds to projects explicitly identified as pro-poor (including those responding to vulnerable groups' needs) or MDG-responsive in plans Baseline (2012): 0 Planned End of Project Target: 70%	85%		UPGP MIS
Indicator 2.3: % of target UPs comply with 90% of accounting and record Keeping requirements. Baseline (2012): 99% (Cash book)			UPGP Monitoring Check list

Planned End of Project Target: 100%	100%		
Indicator 2.4: % of increase, on average, of revenue collection in target UPs Baseline (2012): NA Planned End of Project Target: 90%	115%		Survey on Trends in Union Parishad Revenue collection 2016
Output 3: Strengthened technical capacity of Local Government Division			
Indicator 3.1: Number of drafted legislative or regulatory instruments influenced by outcome of piloting activities Baseline (2012): 0 Planned End of Project Target: 9	9		Rules published by LGD
Indicator 3.2: Existence of a National Framework for Local Government Capacity Development by the end of the project Baseline (2012) : None Planned End of Project Target: 1	1		Adapted by the Government
Indicator 3.3: Implementation of functioning M&E and MIS system in the Monitoring, Investigation and Evaluation Wing of LGD Baseline (2012) : Planned End of Project Target: 1 functioning MIS covering 564 UPs	Web based MIS for 564 UPs is functional		UPGP MIS
Indicator 3.4: Number of DLGs who have a sustainable system for monitoring and backstopping local governments by the end of the project Baseline (2012) : None Planned End of Project Target: 7	7		

iii) Evaluation, Best Practices and lessons Learned

Assessment/Evaluations/Studies

The project carried out Baseline Study in early 2012 and established pre-intervention data base (value) against key indicators to measure changes over time due to project interventions. A Mid-term Evaluation was carried out in 2014; a number of key lessons and recommendations were addressed as appropriate. Another Interim Assessment was conducted in 2015, which evident a significant improvement in many areas over the baseline value. The Final Evaluation of the project carried out in late 2016. However, report yet to be published and findings are expected to be disseminated in the early 2017.

Challenges

During the implementation period the project encountered the following challenges:

- The project momentum dropped due to delays in implementation in number of instances over the project period such as the UP elections were held in the country for the first time along party lines in six phases starting in February and ended in June 2016; political disturbances in 2013 and 2014; and delay in commencement, which affected the implementation of UPGP field level activities including utilization of disbursed funds. However, this delay was overcome by re-adjusting the activities through revision of the work plan and extending the project duration to June 2017.
- Completing the orientation for newly elected UP Chairpersons and Members to enable them take up their work and participate in project activities was a challenge in 2016. The project took initiatives to orient the newly elected UP functionaries immediately after they assume office and completed this task as targeted. Also, the project encountered major challenges in getting the newly elected UPs to prepare the SDG oriented Five-Year Plans because of the lack of awareness of SDGs and limited capacity in the UPs. These challenges were overcome through organising awareness raising workshops on SDGs and hands-on support to the UPs to carry out the preparation of Five-Year Plans.
- The project was confronted with significant reduction of resources on account of Forex Loss. This has effectively reduced the available resources by more than 10% of the project budget. Major adjustment of activities has been made, particularly in relation to capacity building support and volume of performance based grants to manage with limited resources.
- The implementation of project activities at the UPs, particularly support to the Standing Committees to prepare plans and monitor activities, has significantly increased in volume of work of UP Secretaries, which is a major challenge for the UPs. It was evident that inadequacy of human resources at the UP level to implement the rapidly growing portfolio of activities has been an important constraint. Absence of this support poses an important risk to carrying out the proposed activities with the required degree of attention and quality required to achieve expected project results. UPGP has provided significant technical and financial support to draw in the Standing Committees to support in the planning and monitoring process. Though the Government has given due consideration to the issues and has taken a plan to gradually supplement the staffing of UPs with an Assistant Accountant cum Computer Operator over the five years. As a part of this process, recruitment of two thousand staff by FY 2016-2017 is in progress.

- Timely fund disbursement from the development partners has been seen as a challenge for timely implementation of the project activities. This was overcome through regular contact with the development partners.
- The Deputy Directors, Local Government at the districts have been coordinating UPGP work at the local level as a focal point from the Government side. It is evident that frequent transfer of DDLG's slowed down the momentum of the activities to a great extent, which needs to be addressed by intervention from LGD.
- Considering the final year of the project, high staff turnover became a challenge for timely implementation of activities; this was minimized by extra effort put in by the key project personnel.

Lessons learned

While the overall results achieved reflect the cumulative outcomes of the work carried out over the duration of the project, there are some valuable lessons learned as follows:

- Local governance platforms established and institutionalized under the UPGP have created democratic space for citizens who were otherwise deprived and or ignored by the local power structure: Standing Committees of the Union Parishad, the Ward Shavas, and the Women Development Forum. Formal installation of these mechanisms promotes consultative processes and open hearings to ensure Union Parishads are responsive to citizens' needs. Women's participation in local government has improved as a result of the Women Development Forum and targeted support to female leaders.
- Citizens now have better access to information and are more aware of the roles and responsibilities of local government institutions. Systems, processes and activities of the UP have been improved and new provisions of the UP Act 2009 have been understood and internalized, with many well on their way to sustainable institutionalization. Significant improvements have been observed in preparing the five year and annual plans of the UPs, and ensuring targeted attention and response to the needs of the poor.
- The project has applied a combination of capacity building support and performance incentives to promote accountability and transparency. Direct fiscal transfer to UPs has come to be seen as an effective approach to strengthen Local Government Institutions. Extended Performance Based Grants have stimulated healthy competition among the UPs to be eligible for EBPG grant through better performance. The close engagement of UPs during the election year with the performance assessments has highlighted the significance of this instrument. Co-financing is found effective for innovative and broader development scheme.
- A comprehensive ongoing programmatic approach to local governance development will support relevant ministries to more effectively address the various dimensions of an integrated local governance framework. Moreover, decentralization needs to be underscored as a key objective of future support to local governance, in alignment with the 7th five year national development plan and the national SDG implementation plan.
- The sustained use of the web based MIS and accounting system has not only improved timely and reliable reporting, but also ensured accountability, transparency, and effective use of information at the UP and vertical reporting offices. By linking the system with the MIE strategy of the LGD, the project has made it possible to sustain and mainstream the use of this tool across the country.

Way Forward

The experiences of the project and the studies carried out in 2016 provide a robust platform for further work on strengthening UPs.

The growing roles of UPs, particularly in the areas of revenue mobilization, call for a unified legal framework for all LGIs with clear functional and revenue assignments. Such a unified framework would need the political and policy commitment from the central level. If functional assignment is to follow “subsidiarity principles” to allow LGIs to efficiency deliver functions in an accountable manner, it will call for administrative actions that enable functional segregation across LGIs to avoid overlapping and duplication of functions. It will also, at some stage, call for coordination and cooperation with sector ministries.

The support for strengthening the UPs could build on the platform proposed in the Capacity Development Framework for LGIs. The programmatic approach which involves different elements of the LGI system would enable such an integrated set of actions. This would also make it possible to focus on policy and structural reform, which can sustain the results achieved by UPGP.

Information technology platforms developed for UPs could be broad based to enable an integrated oversight of LGIs. This approach could leverage the various sources of financing to support LGIs and enable relevant sector ministries and the Ministry of Finance to support integrated planning and implementation of schemes by LGIs in Bangladesh.

iv) A Specific Story

Problem/Challenge faced: Sunamganj is a Haor area; where the land is under water for up to six months a year. According to the survey of NGO forum, average sanitation coverage is over 85% in most of Bangladesh, while it is only 30% to 39% in haor areas. During the dry season most people in haor make temporary pit latrines and children defecate in the open air. The situation is aggravated during the rainy season while the area remains inundated for approximately six months in a year. Imagine living in a house with at least 5-7 occupants, and that too little girls and boys with no proper basic sanitary facilities such as a toilet. What is more worrying is the appalling unhygienic conditions that these children are exposed to, every single day. This is the common scenario of the haor areas and Ghagatia village of Fatepur Union under Biswamverpur Upazia in Sunamganj District, and is not different from many others.

Programme Interventions: Moved by the plight of the area, the UNDP-UNCDF supported - Union Parishad Governance Project and Upazila Parishad Governance Project provided financial assistance for the construction of 48 “floating latrines” which is made using three to five empty fuel barrels, a plastic sanitary pan, bamboo, rope and some polythene sheet or cloth to provide shade with a cost of only BDT 3,000.00 (around USD 40), while conventional toilets cost ten times the



amount. A five-member family can use such a latrine for up to a month before it needs to be emptied. Given the nature of the materials, such a latrine could be used for four or five years. During the monsoon, the latrine floats on water and during the dry season, it rests on the ground. The community too volunteered with their skills, bamboo, and contributed free labour to get their first toilets. The latrine would serve more than 300 people including larger number of women and school going children. “People used to pollute water as they had no other options, but now we have been using this floating toilet. It is hygienic and really good”, said Mokbul Hossain, Inhabitants of Ghagatia. “The floating latrine pilot initiative is a splendid work of LGD. Now we are planning to spread this technology in other communities of the haor area with the government support. This innovation will contribute to overcome the challenge of unhygienic condition and reduce waterborne disease.” Said-Sheikh Rafiqul Islam, the Deputy Commissioner of Sunamganj District

Result: About 300 inhabitants of Ghagatia village have got the year-round access to hygienic sanitation latrine has resulted in reduced the health risk that people are often exposed to specially children. This would contribute to increase students’ school attendance and, even for the adult population, absence from work due to illness will decrease, so it will improve their ability to earn more and put food on the table and increases their productivity. This initiative has encouraged the local communities to find solutions to their local problems and bring in innovation to address grass root health issues. These initiatives also contribute to advance SDG 6 .

Lessons Learned: Innovation can be the best solution to address local area-based challenges through the introduction of appropriate technologies, Further, this does not require big investment always rather small investment can make a big difference in the lives of the people at personal, social and productive level that contributes to the overall improvement of the quality of life. The projects operating in grass root levels has the space and ability to catalyze local communities in finding tailor made solutions to local problems.