



BANGLADESH REGIONAL WATERWAY TRANSPORT PROJECT 1

BETTER INLAND WATERWAYS LEADING TO MORE **DOMESTIC AND REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY**

BASIC INFORMATION

APPROVAL DATE:

**June 16
2016**

END DATE:

**December 31
2025**

TOTAL COMMITMENT:

\$360 million

IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:

**Bangladesh Inland Waterways
Authority (BIWTA)**

OVERVIEW

The inland water transportation sector can play an important role in improving domestic connectivity and regional integration. As a riverine country, Bangladesh has a large and vibrant Inland Water Transport (IWT) sector. It has 700 rivers, streams and canals with a total length of about 24,000 km. Approximately 6,000 km are navigable during the monsoon (wet) period, shrinking to about 3,900 km in the dry periods. It carries approximately 194 million tons of cargo and about one-quarter of all passenger traffic. The **Bangladesh Regional Waterway Transport Project 1 (BRWTP1)** aims to improve the navigability and year-round safe transport for passengers and cargo along the Chittagong-Dhaka-Ashuganj river routes. This will help , shifting traffic away from heavily congested roads along these routes.



CHALLENGE

Despite its importance, the IWT has received little attention in the last few decades with limited resources allocated to its development. It receives only 4-7 percent of total transport sector funding. Current issues faced by the IWT sector include: (a) lack of funding allocated to maintenance of waterways other than ferry crossing routes and consequently inadequate dredging maintenance which fails to address rapid and continuous processes of sedimentation; (b) outdated hydrographic capability and limited data acquisition for river maintenance and other planning purpose; (c) poor navigation aid system and very limited night time aids; (d) poor safety culture, including outdated rules and regulations, concerning the design, licensing, construction, operation and maintenance of IWT vessels, insufficient vessel shelters, and the lack of facilities for searching and rescuing people in distress; and, (e) insufficient and dilapidated river port facilities for general cargo trade and passenger transport. Many terminal facilities consist of no more than wooden planks for embarking and disembarking passengers and especially challenging for mothers with small children, pregnant women, elderly people and the disabled.

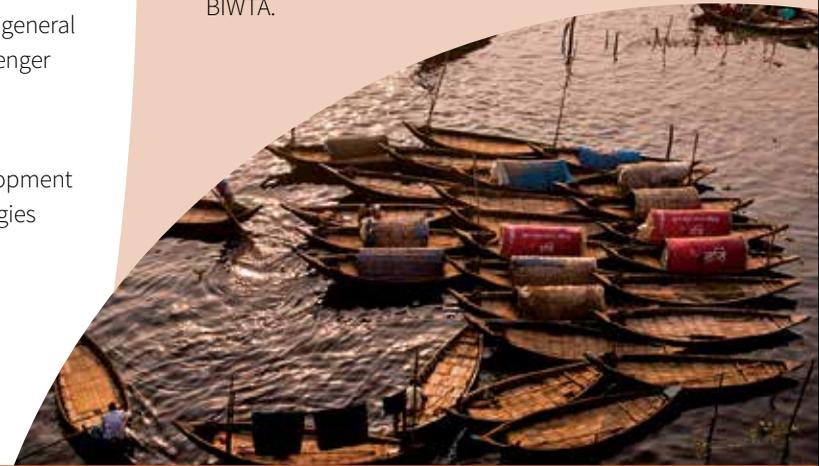
APPROACH

The BRWTP1 will improve and maintain the navigability of inland waterways along the Chittagong-Dhaka-Ashuganj Corridor and connecting routes and support navigation safety improvements. This will help reduce travel time and cost for cargo and passenger transport and boost national and regional trade. The project will build one new general cargo terminal at Pangaon and modernize the existing cargo terminal at Ashuganj. It will also build new passenger terminals at Shashanghat (downstream of Sadarghat) and Madrashaghat (Chandpur); rehabilitate existing passenger terminal at Narayanganj; and extend existing terminal at Barisal.

Further, it will help develop River Information Systems (RIS) and provide and, funding for research and development to enable continuing sector improvement and sustainability. This includes work on sector policies and strategies needed to: improve revenue collection and management; incentivize public and private sector investments especially related to container transport; and, mitigate and improve IWT's impact on the social and physical environment. The project will help improve the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority's capacity to comply with international standards; adopt modern management practices for inland water transport; and achieve long-term operational and financial sustainability.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE

To ensure sustainability of project investments and sector improvement, several key principles have been incorporated in the project design. First, a performance-based maintenance approach is being piloted to innovate the more usual practice for river maintenance and is a departure from customary dredging contracts applied in Bangladesh which have not achieved desired results. Furthermore, the project also focuses on policy, regulatory and institutional development for the IWT sector to improve the competitiveness and attractiveness of IWT, and attract private sector investment, maintain competitive transport costs, incentivize modal shift, and get to cost-recovery and profitability for BIWTA.



EXPECTED RESULTS

Increase **navigability** of project river routes

Reduction of **travel time** on the Dhaka-Chittagong Corridor for cargo vessels

Increase in **annual revenue** tariffs associated with development, maintenance, increased customer satisfaction